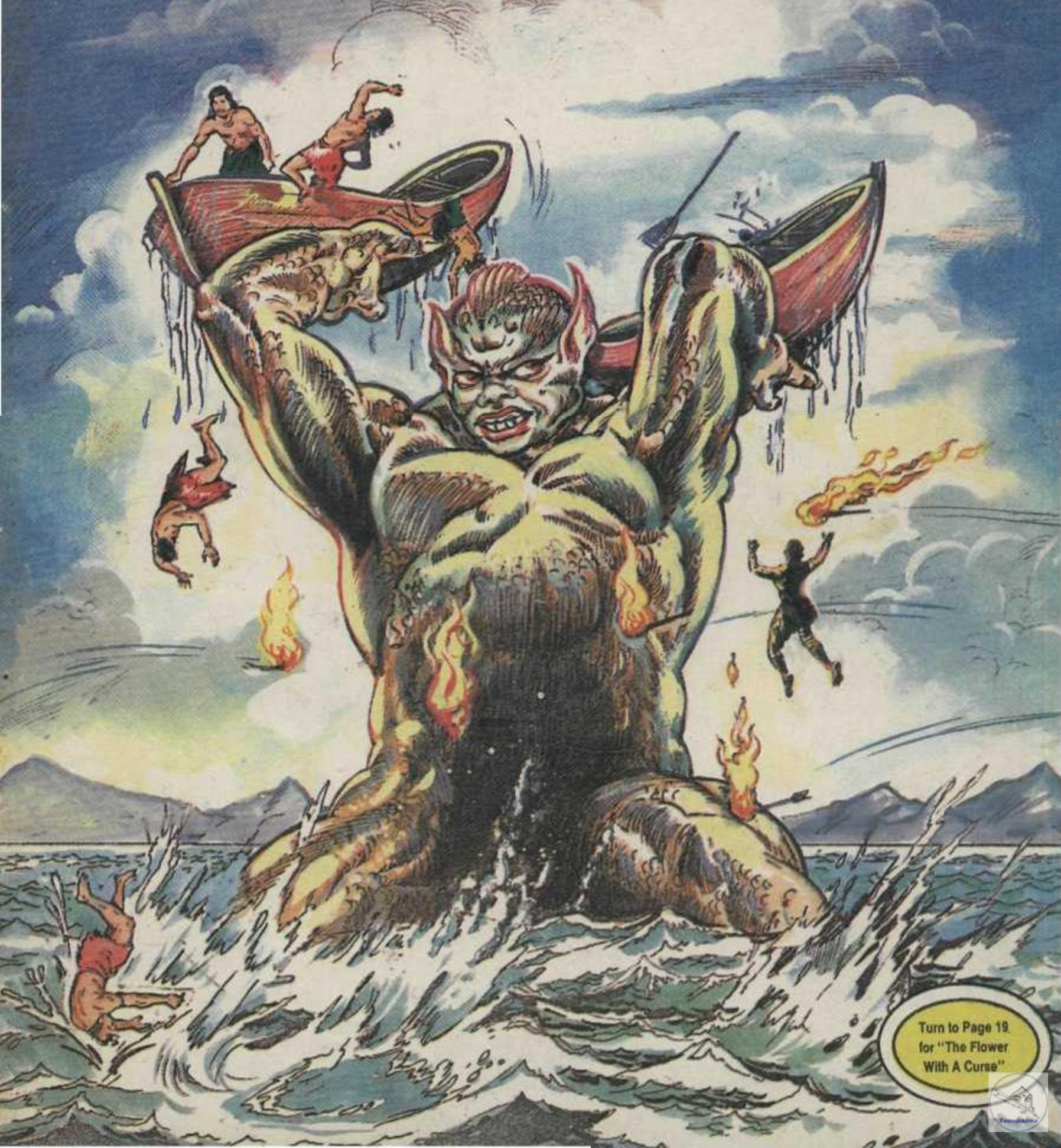


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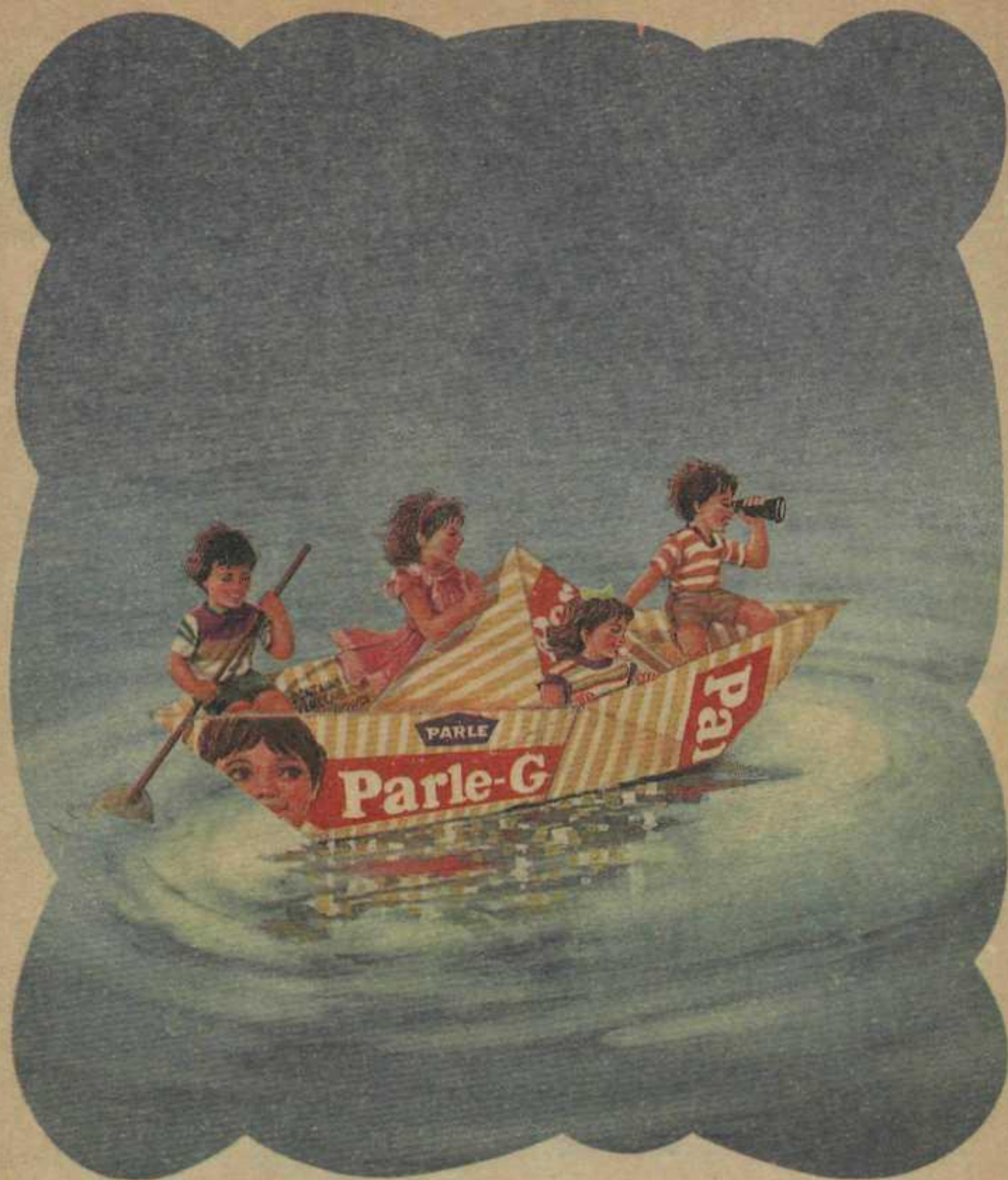
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Turn to Page 19
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And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 24 APRIL 1994 No. 10

THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE : King Mahendra Singh, Commander Arjun Singh, Chieftain Kabui, and Thangal heave a sigh of relief after they witness the fiery end to the monster. They watch the two boats being tossed by him and the soldiers falling from them being crushed in his hands. The sea is calm once again. Thangal decides to stay back at the beach to await possible survivors. There is no trace of Captain Veerendra Kumar. The lone survivor gives them details of the final moments. Thangal goes to the palace to take leave of the king, who offers him a place in Nagapura's army. But the tribal youth is keen to return to Maninagar. He is sent back with an escort of soldiers. Maninagar accords him a warm welcome. King Pratapvarma expresses his gratitude with a surprising offer.

VEER HANUMAN : On his way to Ayodhya, Hanuman visits Valmiki. The sage explains why Rama had to undergo the agony of first abandoning Sita and then losing her after her disappearance along with Mother Bhoomi Devi. Rama is unable to control his tears on seeing Hanuman after so many years. Hanuman consoles him. Rama sends him on an important mission—to retrieve the sacred horse of the Aswamedha yaga.

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NAGI REDDI



Founder :
CHAKRAPANI

WHY FEAR EXAMS?

March appears to be a month mostly dreaded by students; for, it is the time when they have to take their annual examinations in their schools and colleges. Sometimes, the examinations are extended to even April and May. The examinations are a test to find out whether they are qualified for a promotion to the higher classes or for the grant of a degree.

Now, what is there to be afraid of examinations? If the children have been attending their classes regularly, listening to the lectures and guidance given by their teachers, reading their text-books, and writing their notes, besides doing their home-work diligently and periodically revising whatever they have learnt in their classes, they can certainly face every examination with confidence and without any fear of the result, which is what really matters ultimately.

If children realise that they have a dual role to play as students the moment they enter the portals of an educational institution, they would be willing, as well as prepared, to follow the routine and pattern set for them. There would not then arise an occasion to think of resorting to malpractices—or simply, cheating—to cross the hurdle called examination.

By indulging in unfair methods, they cheat not only their teachers and classmates who are otherwise their friends, but themselves, too. For, the so-called success they achieve will not hold them in good stead when they go to the next higher class or go out to face life and shoulder bigger responsibilities.

So, why cheat at all? Take a solemn resolve that none of you will even think of being dishonest to yourself. Have complete confidence in your capabilities, and only try to improve them for the sake of a better—and not what might turn to be a bitter—future.

A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Assistance from Friendly Singapore

We all are familiar with gardens and parks where we go to spend an enjoyable time. Recently, we heard of Information Technology Park—something that will come up soon near Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka. The ceremony to launch this unique park—described as “a student’s delight”—was held on January 28 in Whitefield, 18 km from Bangalore. The project was launched by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Goh Chok Tong.

Before we know more about the park, let us take a look at Singapore—a nation which has been very friendly with us. Before World War II (1939-45), many Indians used to migrate to the Federated Malay States—or FMS as it was popularly called—in search of work. Times were when one could go to the Madras harbour or the Tuticorin port, buy a ticket and board a steamer and travel to Singapore, which was one of the FM States. There was no need to get hold of a



passport or a visa. Singapore, like the different Malay States, thus became a second home for several Indians. They could easily integrate themselves with the Chinese and Malay population there.

History tells us that the island of Singapore or Simhapura (*Simha* in Sanskrit means lion; *Singam* in Tamil also means lion), situated at the entrance to the South China Sea, had a Malay name—Temasek, meaning *sea town*. When a British colonist called Sir Stamford Raffles arrived there in 1819, it was only a fishing village. He entered into a treaty with the then rulers, by which the East India Company (which brought British rule to India) got permission to establish a trading post. Singapore developed rapidly from then on.

In 1858, Singapore came to be ruled directly by the British crown, and it prospered by leaps and bounds. It became the seat of govern-



ment for what came to be known as the Straits Settlements; it was one of the bases of British sea-power; besides it grew into a major port in South East Asia.

For a brief period during the Second World War, Singapore fell into Japanese hands, but the Allies soon recaptured it. It was during the Japanese occupation that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose organised his Azad Hind Fauj in Singapore, with Japanese help, to fight for India's independence. After the War, the people of Singapore clamoured for independence. The island was granted self government in 1959, with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew as Prime Minister. He later became its President. Under his administration, Singapore was turned into a successful economic nation in the world. Mr. Goh Chok Tong took over as Prime Minister in November 1990.

In 1992, during the meeting of the NAM (non-aligned movement) countries in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, our Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, and Mr. Goh Chok Tong exchanged ideas on establishing an Information Technology

Park in India. Singapore evinced a keen interest in the project and persuaded six firms there to form a consortium to develop "business parks" in the Asia Pacific region. One of them was to be in India, in collaboration with the famous Tata Industries and the State Government sponsored Karnataka Industries Area Development Board.

The Karnataka Government has made available some 24 hectares of land for the park, which would cost nearly 500 crores of rupees. The Information Technology Park will have facilities for research and development, design, training, and showroom, residential and recreational accommodation all in one location. Factories for light industries will come up; space will be set apart for computer software research and

development, with facilities for professional and management personnel. The park will ultimately employ some 20,000 people—mostly electronic engineers and people trained in computer and telecommunications technology.

Let's hope the Park may halt the flight of "brain" from India!



News Flash



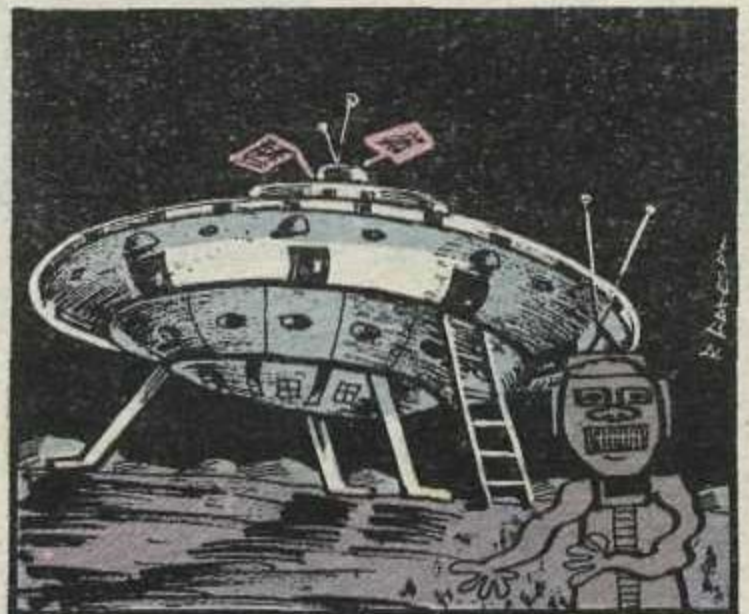
Music has charms

Music was played in farms which resulted in a better yield. When cows were entertained with music, they gave more milk. Many offices have channel music which does not disturb the employees; instead, their efficiency improves. Have you tried plugging in your walkman and listening to some music while you read your text-books or solve problems in mathematics? You may find everything easy. Music has now "invaded" operation theatres! In Muenster, Germany, surgeons in a University hospital have started performing heart operations to the sound of music! The music is meant not for the patient nor his/her heart! The patient will as usual be under anaesthesia; so the music is to help the doctors relax while they concentrate on the surgery. Maybe a day will come

soon when music will take the place of anaesthetics!

India's own UFOs

Unidentified Flying objects (UFOs) have in recent years become a subject of serious research, investigation, and study. One researcher, Richard L Thomson, of the U.S.A., has been studying reports of UFO sightings and landings of several years. And during his study he has come across at least 40 "parallels" in the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas*. Of course, UFOs appear (if one believes in them) suddenly, without any advance notice. So, it is difficult to record details. In 1976, a brightly lit flying object was sighted over Teheran, capital of Iran. When a U.S. jet fighter went to investigate, its entire electronic sys-

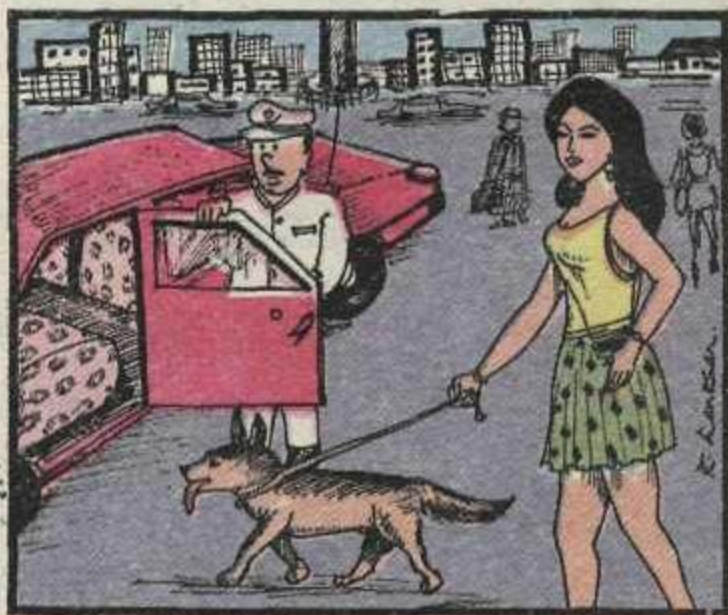


tem went haywire! However, when the plane changed its course, the system

started functioning again. A smaller object separated from the main UFO and landed. Thomson has discovered a parallel in *Bhagavata Purana*, which gives a description of the *Vimana* Krishna got from Siva to drive away King Salva, who wanted to destroy Dwaraka. Thomson believes that Krishna's "whirling firebrand" was something like a UFO.

Living in style

Gunther has a maid to brush his teeth; she also prepares his bath in which the water is perfumed; a caretaker prepares his meal. Sometimes after a meal, he goes back into his pool specially built for him. And every day he has his outings in a chauffeur-driven car. That is living in real style, but he can afford it because he has inherited millions of dollars left by a German countess



whose pet he was—till her death late last year. Who is 'he'—did you ask? Well, Gunther is a one-year-old shepherd dog, now leading a life of luxury in Pisa, Italy.

Two-year stay in greenhouse

The other day, four men and four women came out of a huge 'cubicle'—no, not after a bath—after staying inside for two years. If the earth can be called Biosphere I, this cubicle was called Biosphere II, which was as large as 1.3 hectares. This giant glass-and-steel greenhouse in the Arizona desert was fully self-contained and had a mini-ocean, mini-desert, a rain-forest, marsh, and a piece of land with low plants and trees. It was a unique experiment to



find out if human beings can sustain themselves in perfect environment. The eight 'bionauts' grew wheat and fruit, reared goats and chicken and produced some 80 per cent of the food they needed. The rest 20 per cent they had from stored food. The results of the experiment are yet to be made known, but the eight researchers between 28 and 68 years were surely happy to be back with their kith and kin.

ONCE UPON A TIME A HUNTER WAS ROAMING IN A FOREST IN SEARCH OF PREY.

WHAT'S THAT?
I CAN'T
BELIEVE MY EYES!



A BIRD LAYING A GOLDEN
EGG!



I CAN MAKE A FORTUNE
WITH THAT BIRD.



THE HUNTER CATCHES THE
BIRD WHICH HAD LAID A
GOLDEN EGG AND KEEPS
HER IN A CAGE.



IT'S RISKY TO KEEP THIS
BIRD WITH ME.



I'LL OFFER IT TO THE KING
AND GET A REWARD



IN THE PALACE...

WHO'RE YOU? WHAT DO
YOU WANT?



PERMIT ME TO OFFER TO
YOUR MAJESTY THIS RARE
BIRD WHICH LAYS A GOLDEN
EGG EVERY DAY.



AH! A BIRD LAYING
GOLDEN EGGS?

IT'S INDEED RARE! GIVE THE
HUNTER A BIG REWARD.



SIRE, DON'T BELIEVE THE
ROGUE. IT'S JUST AN ORDINARY
BIRD.



Whatever is done with a spotless mind is
virtue. All else is vain show.

—Thirukkural



HE WANTS TO CHEAT YOU
AND GET THE REWARD!



O KING! BELIEVE ME. THIS
BIRD REALLY LAYS GOLDEN
EGGS.



DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, SIRE!
HE'S A DUPE.



GUARDS! TAKE THIS HUN-
TER AWAY! AND FREE THE
BIRD FROM THE CAGE.



SO THE FOOLISH KING, ON THE
ADVICE OF HIS FOOLISH COUN-
SELLORS, FREES THE BIRD. TO
THEIR AMAZEMENT, IT LAYS A
GOLDEN EGG BEFORE IT FLIES
AWAY.



RAKTAKSHA CONCLUDES THE
STORY...

ENOUGH OF YOUR
NONSENSE!

THAT'S HOW THE KING WHO
WAS ILL-ADVISED LOST THE
BIRD THAT LAID GOLDEN EGGS.



WE CAN JUDGE WHAT'S
RIGHT AND WHAT'S WRONG.
STOP YOUR SILLY STORIES!



RAKTAKSHA RESENTS THE
INSULT AND CALLS TOGETHER
HIS FOLLOWERS.

FRIENDS! A GREAT CATA-
STROPHE IS GOING TO
BEFALL OUR KING!



The touch by children gives pleasure to the
body; the hearing of their words, pleasure
to the ear.



A CLEVER JACKAL, WHO HAS MADE IT HIS HOME, COMES THERE AT NIGHT.



Let a man by patience overcome those who through pride commit excesses.



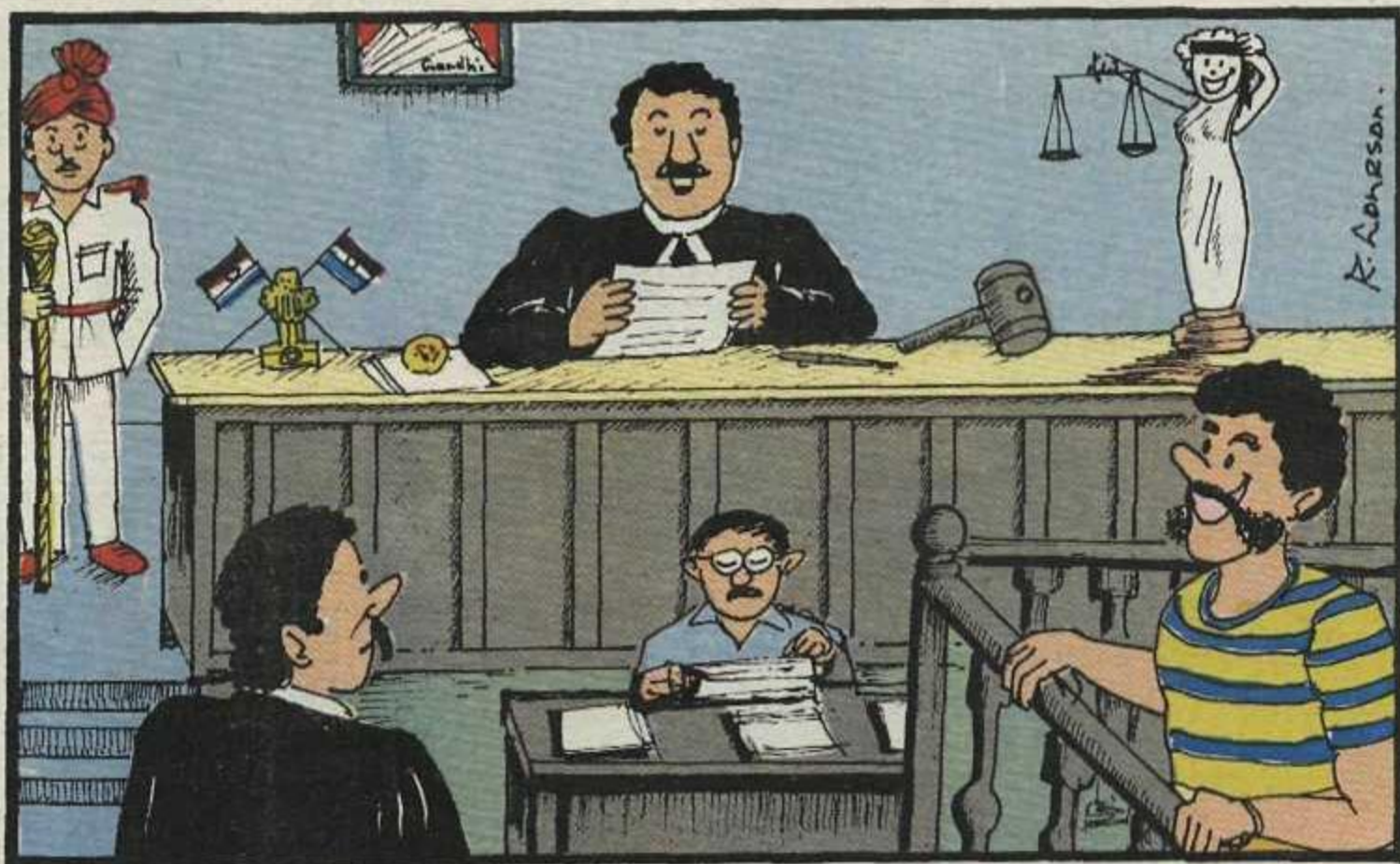
All lamps of nature are not lamps; the lamp
of truth is the wisest.

Towards Better English

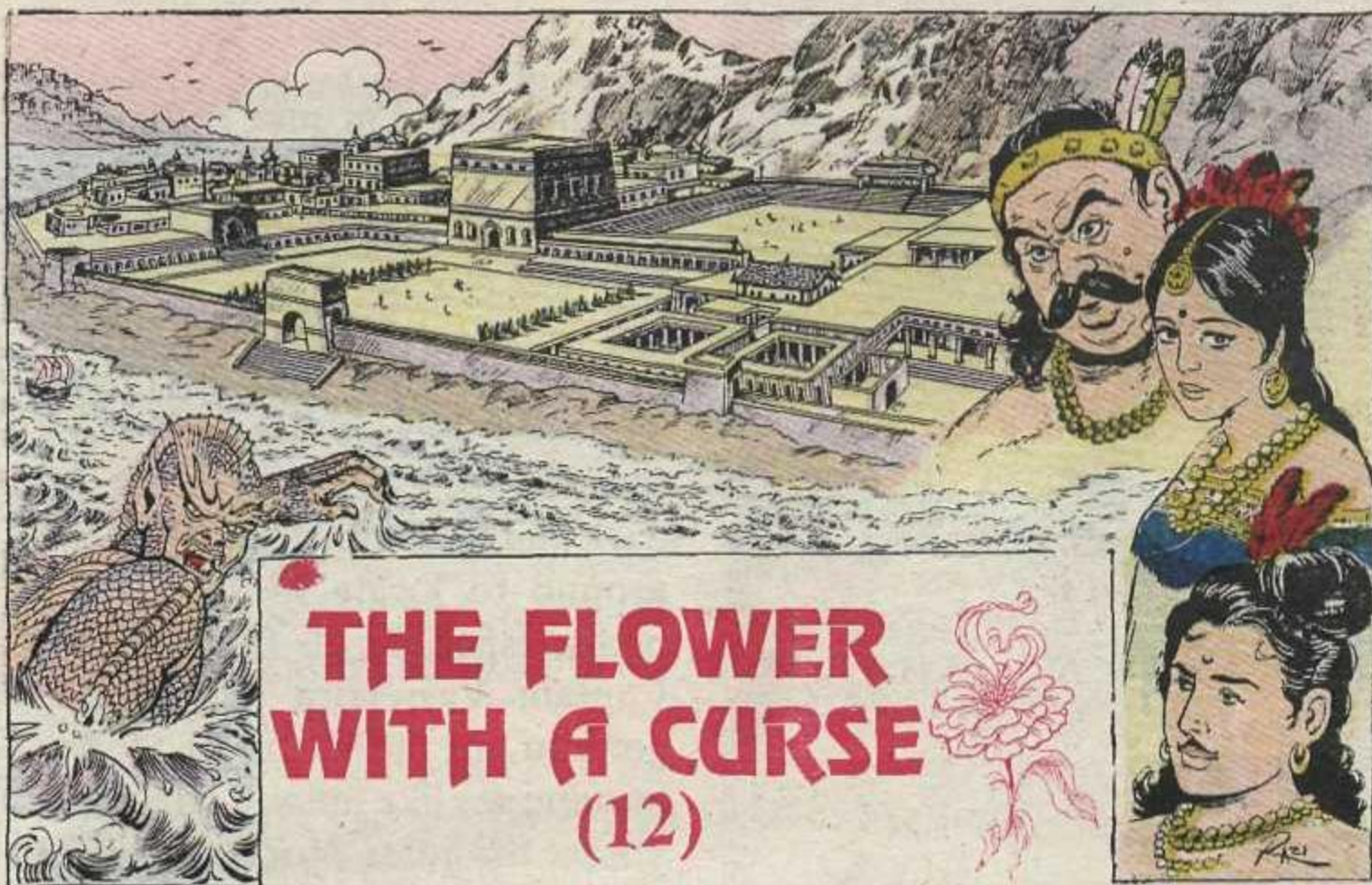
Of Doctors and Hospitals

Reader Mansa Kumar Rout wants to know the difference between *medical* and *hospital*. Medical pertains to the practice of medicine (e.g. Dr. B.C. Roy was a *medical* practitioner. Whereas Dr. Radhakrishnan had obtained his *doctorate* in philosophy and so was not a medical doctor. *Hospital* is the institution or the building where a medical doctor treats people suffering from diseases.

Reader Jyotiranjana Biswal of Dhenkanal wants to know the meaning of the expression "to pay scot and lot". That is an old legal phrase (equivalent to modern day tax) which relates to the payments to be made to the parish for the poor, the church, lighting, cleansing, and watching. The word *scot* means a payment—a customary tax, and when someone is untaxed, we can say he is let off scot-free! When there is not enough evidence to convict a person of a crime, he is let free and so he goes scot-free.



He also asks, what is meant by "to sit on the safety-valve"? You know how a safety-valve functions, say on your pressure-cooker. It allows the steam to escape when the pressure inside the cooker becomes too great. A safety-valve is also something that allows you to express strong feelings without hurting other people. So, when you decide to sit on a safetyvalve, you only prevent it from operating or functioning, to your own detriment. So beware!



(The theft of "Shatabdika" from both Princess Mallika's apartments as well as Chieftain Kabui's residence delays the departure of Thangal and Captain Veerendra Kumar to meet the monster from the sea with the flowers. While the Captain's complicity in the theft is feared, Kabui's daughter Chitra brings the news of the find of the flowers and the boat on the beach. The tribal youth and the Captain set out immediately as ordered by King Mahendra Singh. As the two await the monster, Veerendra Kumar reveals his plan to usurp the throne, and pushes Thangal into the sea, fearing he may prove to be an obstacle.)

Back in Maninagar, more than everybody else, Thangal's little sister, Laisna, and Princess Priyamvada were slowly getting anxious, as the tribal youth had not returned even after a week of his leaving on the hazardous mission. In the palace Laisna spent her time helping the princess in looking after the

women and children who had been given refuge in the palace.

But when night came, Laisna would feel miserable as she missed her affectionate brother. That night, Laisna fell asleep with great difficulty, as she pined for her brother, whose safety in the sea, where he had dared to go all by himself, caused not a little

A FIERY END





worry in her. She dozed off, but woke up suddenly. "Brother!"

Priyamvada heard the cry and got up from her bed and went to Laisna. "Thangal? Has he come back?"

"No, princess. It was a dream, and I thought I saw him being thrown overboard by" Laisna could not complete her sentence.

"By the monster, Laisna?" queried the princess. "But, Laisna, that was only a dream. Nothing will happen to your brother. He is so brave, and he has no intention of fighting with

the monster. I'm sure he'll come back soon. Tomorrow I shall ask my father whether he has received any news."

Once he got into his boat, Thangal began rowing back towards the cliffs. It was not yet dark and he did once or twice look around to locate the other two boats, especially to find whether Captain Veerendra Kumar had got into one of them or had fallen into the sea like himself. He could not see the boats. Nor could he see anyone struggling in the sea or trying to swim to safety.

The tribal youth also noticed that there were no flowers lying scattered on the surface of the sea. He surmised that the bunches of "Shatabdika" must have been removed to one of the two boats. The Captain had not disclosed to him how he would put the flowers to use to carry out his diabolical plan of usurping the throne of Nagapura.

Thangal rowed as fast as he could. Soon he saw the cliffs at a distance. The tide had started and as he neared the cliffs, he found his boat being tossed



about by the waves. He stopped rowing and hoped that his boat would be swept through the opening in the cliffs by the waves.

It happened just as he had anticipated. In a split second, both he and his boat landed on the beach after a violent somersault. Fortunately, he was not hurt. Thangal dragged himself away from the sea and pulled the boat and the two paddles into the safety of the land.

He knew he must reach someone as quick as possible. He decided on the Chieftain and ran towards the tribal houses. At the Chieftain's abode, a lone lamp was burning inside. He was panting, yet he shouted, "Kabui! Kabui!"

Someone opened the door. It was his daughter, Chitra. "Oh! It's you! What happened?"

Thangal could only guess what she was saying. "Where's Kabui?"

"Ba?" asked Chitra. "He has gone to the Commander's house." She pointed her finger in the direction of the palace.

Thangal thought she was referring to the king. "The Raja?" He saw Chitra shaking her head. "Commander Arjun Singh?" This



time she nodded. Thangal turned round and ran, leaving a stupefied Chitra.

Thangal had no difficulty in reaching the Commander's residence. He barged into the front hall where Arjun Singh was in conversation with Chieftain Kabui. Both rose from their seats on seeing Thangal, half-wet and all dishevelled. "Thangal!" they exclaimed in unison. "What happened? Where is Captain....."

"I don't know! I fell into the sea" Thangal tried to catch his breath.





"The monster ... did he attack you?" That came from Kabui.

The Commander made Thangal sit down. He patted his back. After regaining his breath, Thangal narrated to them all that had happened at sea.

"Thank God! You're safe!" said Kabui, taking the youth's hands into his. "Now that you say you didn't see any of those flowers scattered in the sea, they must be in one of the boats. And the only one who is attracted to 'Shatabdika' is the monster. What'll the Captain do with them? That is, if he himself has

not fallen into the sea."

"No, Kabui, I think I can guess what's happening," said Commander Arjun Singh. "We all are aware how ambitious the Captain is. From what he told Thangal, we can assume that he has begun plotting his way to achieve his aim. I wouldn't be surprised if Veerendra Kumar wants to make use of the flowers and, with the help of the flowers, the monster to carry out his wicked plans. Suppose he succeeds in enticing the monster to Nagapura? Then the kingdom will suffer the same fate as had happened to Maninagar!"

"But sir, only I have seen the monster," said Thangal. "The Captain has no idea how huge the monster is. For one thing, he cannot get through the opening in the cliffs to reach the kingdom. Of course, I'm not aware of any other route by which one can enter Nagapura. I can assure you, sir, the monster will not enter through the cliffs."

"Anyway, let's go and inform the king and take his advice, too," said Kabui. "Whatever happens, the king, queen, and the princess must be protected."



All three of them then hurried to the palace. King Mahendra Singh was surprised to see them. "Didn't you go to meet the monster, young man?" he asked Thangal. "Did Kumar get the fright and take to his heels?"

"Your Majesty, there have been some unforeseen developments," said the Commander. He then gave the king a vivid account of all that had happened, and his own reading of the developments.

"Forget about my queen and daughter, Arjun Singh," remarked the king. "We must guard the kingdom and protect the people. I think we must meet the monster and all those who now befriend him before they enter the kingdom. I suggest we all proceed to the cliffs right now. Ask your men to bring lighted torches. They may be useful because, if what we hear about the monster is right, he is shy of light and brilliance and may avoid them. Kabui, Thangal, you both should proceed to the cliffs immediately and watch for any movements in the sea. We all will reach the place as quick as possible."

When Kabui and Thangal



reached the Chieftain's residence, they found the womenfolk at the porch anxiously waiting for them. Kabui took his wife inside and spoke to her for a few moments. Chitra seemed to have gone and called some of her friends. They all had a worried look, but did not have the courage to ask anything of Thangal, though Chitra was eager to talk to him. When they saw the Chieftain coming out in haste, they merely guessed that there was some kind of emergency. They saw the two rushing towards the beach, where earlier





in the morning they had come upon the boat and the flowers.

When they reached the cliffs, Kabui and Thangal saw that the sea was calm except for the waves striking against the tall rocks. They could not see any movement on the surface of the sea or on the beach, as far as their eyes could reach.

Suddenly they heard voices at a distance. They were at first very faint, but soon they became louder and still louder. They came from men rowing their boats. Were the soldiers who had escorted Thangal and Captain

Veerendra Kumar returning? Would the Captain be with them? If the flowers were in the boats, wouldn't they have attracted the monster?

The voices were now coming nearer and nearer and both of them could see the boats, one behind the other approaching the cliffs. "I can see a dark figure standing in the first boat," said Kabui. "Could it be the Captain?"

Thangal did not reply him immediately. He thought he had seen the outline of something huge, like a mountain. Was the mountain not moving? He managed to keep his eyes wide open. In the next few minutes, he could not control his excitement. "There! Kabui! The monster!"

"Where? I can't see a thing!"

"You'll have to look sharp for a few moments together, Kabui," said Thangal. "You'll find something like a small mountain etched against the skies."

"Wait a moment, yes, I think I saw something," said Kabui.

"Have you ever seen a mountain in this part of the sea before, Kabui?" Thangal prompted him.

"True. That means, this is *not*

any mountain, but something like one," replied Kabui.

"So, it can only be the monster, and he is following the boats," said Thangal, now in a whisper. "As I told you, this 'mountain' can't pass through the cliffs. So, what will the monster do to get at the flowers, if the flowers are really in the boats?"

"Well, let's see what happens then," said Kabui. He was now equally excited himself. "I wish the king and the Commander were here to see all this."

Thangal turned round. "Look! They're coming! I can see the torches at a distance."

Now, Kabui too could see the torches, and silhouetted against the light the king and the Commander and a host of soldiers, who were holding the torches high in their hands. They all soon joined Kabui and Thangal on the cliffs. The soldiers lined up the cliffs and the light from the torches lit the sea for some distance.

Even without anybody pointing it out to them, the king and the Commander could see the two boats approaching the shores. The boats were still far

away and so, they could not see who were in the boats. It was definite that one person was standing in the boat in front.

Close behind the boats could be seen the dark form of a huge figure. It was no mountain. "There! It must be the monster!" said Commander Arjun Singh.

"No doubt about it!" the king agreed with him. "I think what Thangal told us is correct. How can such a huge figure pass through the cliffs?"

They did not have to wait for long to see what the monster intended to do. He was seen stretching his hands to catch something in front. What else was there except the two boats?

Those standing on the cliffs missed a beat when they saw the monster's hands grappling with the sides of the boat near him. The man, who was still then standing in the boat, lost his balance and fell inside.

"Shoot! Send your torches at the monster!" shouted the Commander at the top of his voice. The soldiers strung the torches to the bows in their hands and shot. More torches were lit and handed to the soldiers at the edge of the cliffs.



Some of the torches fell in the sea. Some could not avoid falling into the boats. The monster found the light from the torches unbearable. He began shielding his eyes with one hand, the other hand still trying to get a grip on the boat. He could not thus evade the torches hitting his body all over. The whole body was ablaze.

The monster let go the boat from his hand and lowered himself into the sea, but only for a moment. As he surfaced again, he knocked down both the boats and the people inside, who were thrown out. His attention was now drawn to the bunches of flowers floating in the water here and there. In his frenzy to lay his hands on them, he also grabbed the puny figures around him. They were crushed in his strong hands. He pounced on one bunch, then another bunch, and still another bunch. Whoever went into his hands along with the flowers were crushed by him and thrown afar. Their loud cries rent the air.

Meanwhile, the torches shot from the cliffs were hitting him all over, that set him ablaze once again. In his excitement to grab

as many bunches as possible, he did not mind getting hit. When he appeared satisfied with whatever he could pounce on, he tried to turn round and go his way. A shower of torches fell on his head, which was now like one huge ball of fire. He let go the flowers and sank. A loud gurgling sound came from beneath the sea. For some time there was no further trace of the monster.

Meanwhile, the soldiers had stopped shooting any more torches. Everybody on the cliffs heaved a great sigh of relief. There was now no more doubt left that the men in the boats were the soldiers from Nagapura and the man guiding them from one of the boats was none other than Captain Veerendra Kumar. They could see a few of the soldiers struggling in the water. But there was no way to help them except to lit the sea with the torches so that they could find their way to the shore.

A few soldiers ran down to the beach to wait for them. There was nothing more that the others on the cliff could do. "I think, that was the end of the monster!" said King Mahendra Singh.



"See, he didn't surface again, and most of the flowers are still afloat. He didn't come back for long to get at the flowers. That means either he is no more, or he is no longer attracted to the flowers. What do you say, Arjun Singh? Kabui? Thangal?"

"Your surmise is correct, Your Majesty," said the Commander. "That will be the only explanation for his disappearance. Let's leave some of the soldiers here and go back to the palace. And whoever comes out of the sea will be brought to us. They will be able to tell us what exactly had happened."

"Yes, the Commander is right," said the Chieftain. "I think we've seen the end of the monster, though there are a few things missing in the picture, so to say. Like, what has happened to Captain Veerendra Kumar? Why did he go after the monster? Or

why did he want to attract him to Nagapura? Is he alive or has he met with a watery grave?"

Before anyone could answer him, Thangal interjected. "Your Majesty, if you'll permit me, I'll stay with the soldiers on the beach till daybreak. If the Captain has saved himself and makes his way back here, I would tackle him. Please don't worry about me; I'll be safe in the company of the soldiers. After daybreak, I shall come to you to decide when I could go back to Maninagar, now that my mission is achieved."

King Mahendra Singh consulted Arjun Singh and Kabui, and they all accepted Thangal's suggestion. The Commander called some soldiers and asked them to accompany Thangal to the beach and to stay with him.

—To conclude



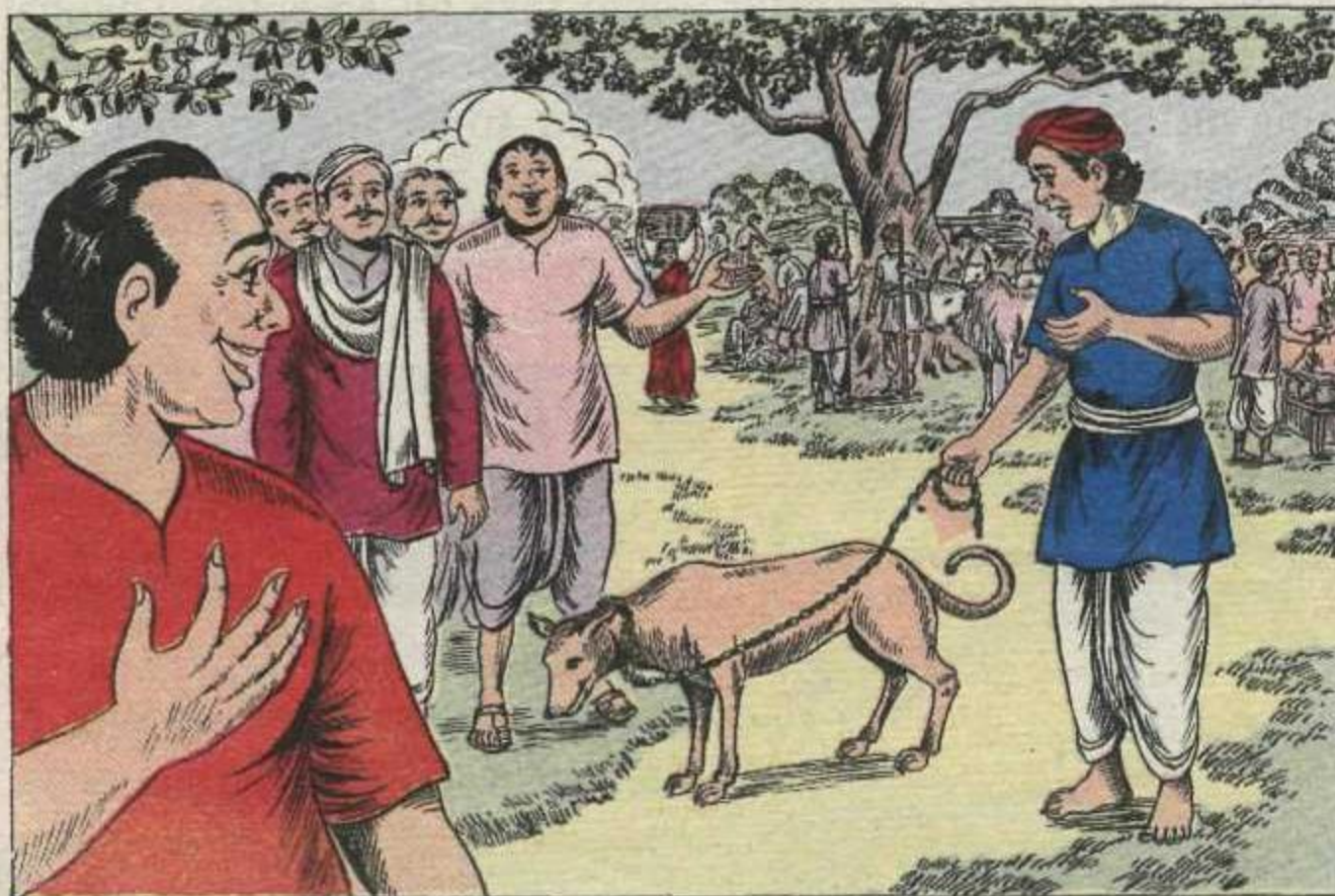
IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE!

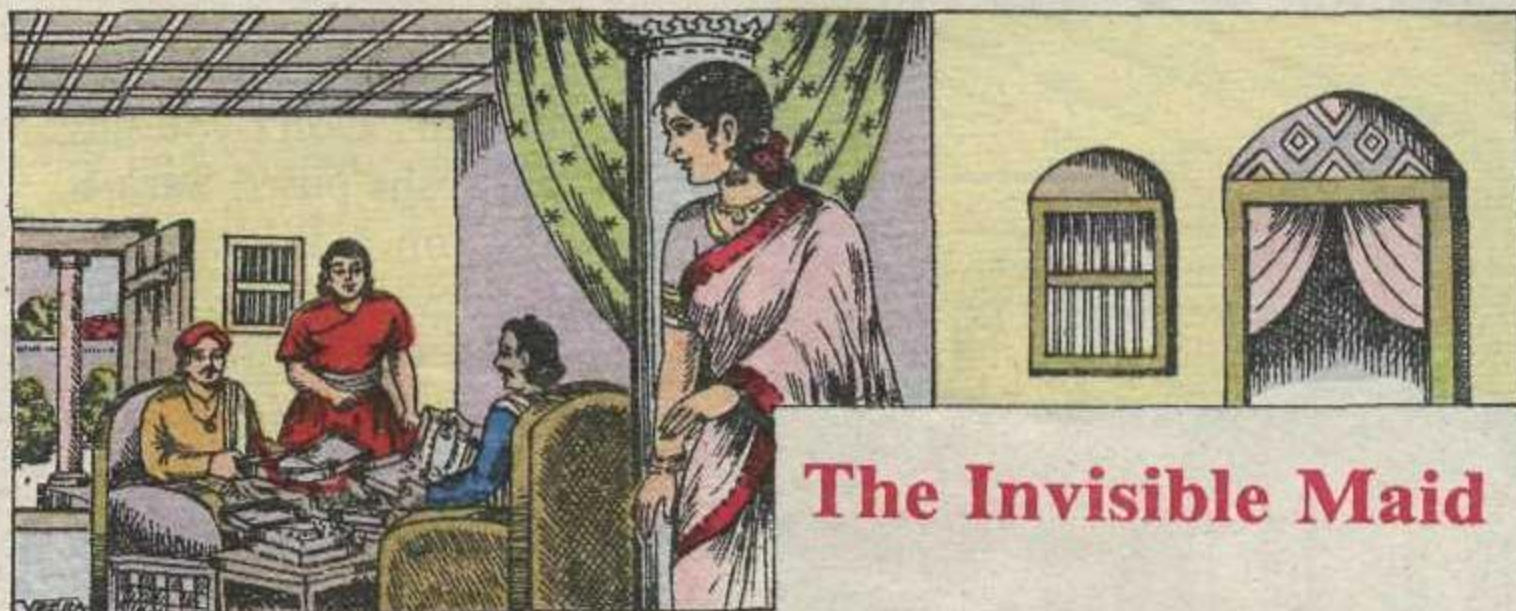
Vellayan led his dog to the weekly shandy in Tirupur. "This dog here will obey all commands! However hard may be the task you give him, he'll carry it out just as you order him! Any takers?" he shouted at the top of his voice.

Soon a crowd collected around him. He repeated his commendations about his dog. Someone from the crowd inched forward. "If he is so good and obedient, then why do you want to sell him away?" the man queried.

"What shall I say to that!" Vellayan responded, though not very enthusiastically. "Last night, thieves entered my house. He obeyed all their orders. They asked him not to bark. They asked him to fetch a rope to tie me and my wife. And they gave him a lantern, which he held by his mouth and showed them round the place. I've lost everything except this dog. That's why I want to dispose him off!"

All those in the crowd had a hearty laugh.





The Invisible Maid

Sarasu hailed from a poor family; her friend Sumati was the daughter of affluent parents. The difference in status did not hinder their friendship. However, Sarasu was careful and never sought any help from Sumati. She ensured that she was not under any obligation to Sumati at any time.

One day, a jeweller came to Sumati's house, and showed his collection to her father. He bought four items. The jeweller's assistant, Venkat, wrote the bill, put the four ornaments in a pouch, and handed it to Sumati's father.

Venkat was smart and handsome, and Sumati was instantly drawn to him. She wished to marry him and wanted to know his mind—whether *he* would care to marry her. She did not dare

ask him directly, so she made Sarasu find out his wish from him.

Sarasu met him and broached the subject. "No, I don't wish to marry your friend," Venkat told her pointblank. "Instead, I would like to marry *you*!"

Sarasu informed Sumati of what Venkat had told her. From that day, she became jealous of Sarasu. She was also angry with Venkat. Look at that! He preferred someone from a poor family, to wealthy bride. But she did not exhibit her disappointment, but congratulated Sarasu and Venkat, whose wedding took place before long. Sumati, too, got married soon afterwards to someone as wealthy as she.

After a few years, Sumati came to know that Sarasu was living in Samajpur not far away from the



place where she herself stayed. She was eager to find out how the couple fared. Sumati went to Samajpur, accompanied by her maid.

Sarasu was overjoyed when, on answering the knock, she found Sumati at her door. She received Sumati and her maid with cordiality. In no time did Sumati find out everything about Sarasu and Venkat, and how happy they were and what a contented life they led. She could not control her jealousy. She waited for a whole day.

The next day she asked Sarasu,

“Do you attend to all household chores yourself? Don’t you have any servant?” she pitied Sarasu.

“Perhaps you didn’t see her!” said Sarasu. “She finished all her work without your noticing her. See how neat she has kept the place!”

“Oh! So, you do have a maid?” Sumati expressed surprise. “I didn’t know.” In fact, she stayed there for three days and never for once did she have a chance to see Sarasu’s maid.

The day Sumati was returning home, Sarasu took four saris to Sumati and asked her to choose one for her sake. “Oh no! I don’t wear such saris!” Sumati put on a horrified look. “I give them to my servants. I shall call my maid and ask her to select one for herself.”

Sarasu was bewildered. What a change had come over her friend! She soon found what exactly had provoked Sumati to reject a gift from her. She kept quiet and did not show her anger towards Sumati.

A few days later, Sarasu was visiting her father’s place. When Sumati heard of her arrival, she called on her and said, “Before you return, you must come home



and take food at our place.”

“Could I bring my maid along with me?” Sarasu asked her.

“Why doubt? Do bring her along,” replied Sumati.

A day before she went back to Samajpur, Sarasu went to Sumati’s place. She welcomed her and asked her, “Why didn’t you bring your maid along?”

“How could I bring her to *your* place?” Sarasu replied plainly.

Sumati thought that Sarasu might have remembered her status, and that was why she did not bring her maid with her. How could Sarasu’s maid come and eat at her place? That would have affected her prestige. That was why Sarasu decided against taking her maid along, Sumati contended.

Before Sarasu got up to go, Sumati asked her maid to bring in some saris from her room. “You must take one of them; it’s a gift from me!” she prompted Sarasu.

“As you gave my sari to your maid, I shall also give your sari to my maid,” said Sarasu.

“Don’t tell me you give such costly saris to your maid!” Sumati could not believe her



ears. “Such saris are usually worn by wealthy women like me!”

“Oh! I don’t treat my maid any differently,” replied Sarasu. “She is like any one of us. So I give her the same kind of saris that I wear!”

Sumati was very upset on hearing this. Was it a tit for tat? she wondered. She realised how her friend must have been hurt when she refused to accept a sari from Sarasu. A few days later, her husband had some work in Samajpur, so she went along with him. While he got busy with his work, Sumati went to call on





Sarasu. When she came and opened the door, Sumati guessed that Sarasu was at the well washing clothes and she had left her work unfinished to open the door for her. Her sari was wet all over and her hair was all dishevelled. But her greater surprise was when she noticed Sarasu wearing the sari she had taken from her for her maid.

"Why, didn't your maid come for work today?" she asked Sarasu.

"Oh! My maid? I'm the maid here!" replied Sarasu, without

any shame. "I do all the chores here. In fact, it's better that we attend to all these chores ourselves, when our arms and legs are strong and healthy and can take any amount of strain. Why then should we need any maid? We get all faction when we do all the work ourselves."

"Sarasu, you must forgive me!" said Sumati, swallowing her pride. "I was just jealous of you that's why I behaved like that when I came to meet you last time. Now I realise my folly. You're so good!"

Two great talkers will not travel far together.

To understand everything is to forgive everything.

The ruler proclaims the good news himself; he sends his messengers to announce the bad news.

The man who cannot dance will complain that the band is no good.

Patience is a bitter plant, but it has a sweet fruit.

Chandamama Supplement-65

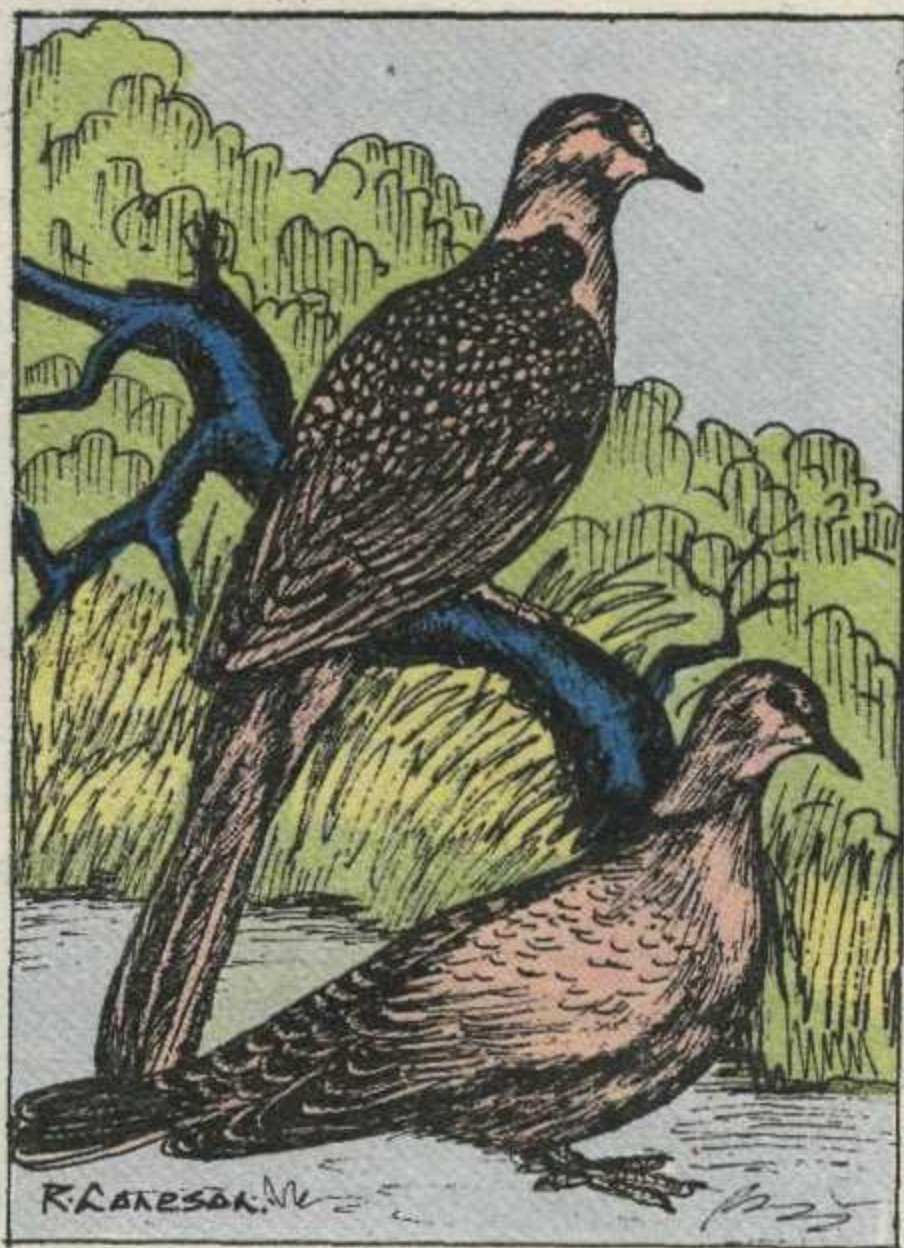
BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

Symbol of Peace

The *Old Testament* tells us of the great flood when Noah and his family got into a large boat (ark) along with some birds and animals. As they rowed the boat, Noah sent a dove to find out if there was any piece of dry land so that he could take his boat and 'passengers' there. Twice the dove returned. The third time it came, it had in its beak a dry twig of an olive tree. Noah then headed for that place. Even today, when the dove is drawn as a messenger of peace, you will find a dry twig in its beak. Incidentally, you won't expect messengers of peace to quarrel, will you? Well, doves very rarely quarrel among themselves or with other birds!

Though looking like pigeons, doves are smaller in size. The most common Ring Dove is identified by the black ring, like a collar, on the back of its neck. The body is a pale grey. The Brown Dove is smaller than the Ring Dove. It is brown in colour and has grey patches on the sides of the wings.

The Rufus (meaning reddish brown) Turtle Dove is the largest of all doves. It has a patch of black and bluish-grey scale markings on either side of the neck. The white or slate-grey tail is long. The Spotted Dove looks prettier than the Turtle Dove. It is distinguished by the white spots on its brown underparts. The neck has white and black spots, looking like the checks on a chessboard.



(This series concluded)





RABINDRANATH TAGORE



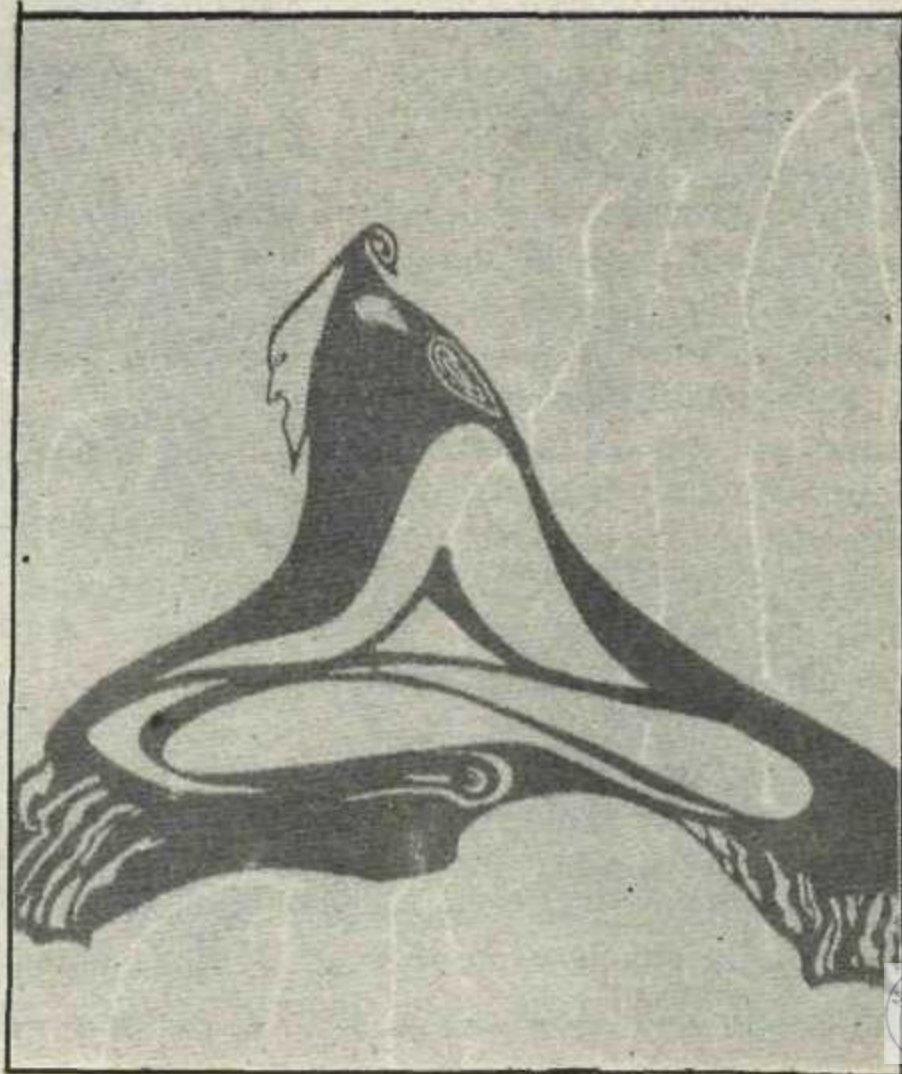
The great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, was sailing for Peru. While on board the ship, he took ill.

The ship's doctor as well as his well-wishers on the ship advised him to break journey and take rest for some days. Accordingly, the poet got down at Buenos Aires.

One of his ardent admi-

rers, Victoria Ocampo, received him and took him to her mansion situated on the outskirts of the city. The poet recovered from his illness before long, and he devoted himself to writing poems one after another.

He was also doing something else.





One day, Victoria Ocampo was casually turning the leaves of the poet's notebook when, and to her pleasant surprise, she saw some sketches. They were human figures—mostly faces—drawn with ink. They were quite forceful.

“Do you know what a wonderful artist you are?” she asked the poet. Perhaps the poet did not know. But

Victoria Ocampo was certain that she had discovered a hidden aspect of the poet's genius. She insisted that he took to art seriously.

That was in 1924. The poet was already sixty-seven years old. But his ever-green creative mind started painting picture after picture—during the rest of his life, which extended to only another seventeen years.

He drew mostly on paper, with the help of ink. Human heads, faces, birds, and landscapes were his favourite subjects. They were unique, bearing a stamp of originality, though one could see some western influence on them. Tagore himself said: “Art is a solitary pedestrian who walks alone among the multitude, continually assimilating various experiences, unclassifiable and uncatalogued.”

By the time Tagore died in 1941, he had drawn nearly 2,500 such pictures.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. How many stripes are there on the flag of the United States of America? What do they represent?
2. The author of *Natyā Sastra* is Bharata Muni. The name Bharata is said to represent the three basic elements of Indian music. What are they?
3. In Italy, a vegetable used to be called 'apple of gold'. Which is that vegetable?
4. Which English poet is called "poet's poet"?
5. Which country will you go to watch the famous form of drama called "Kabuki"?
6. A flowering tree was brought to India from elsewhere, where it has disappeared, but has thrived in India. What is the name of the tree and from where was it brought?
7. In 1918, Iceland attained independence from which country?
8. Who was the woman who flew alone from England to Australia?
9. Which is the world's largest Christian Church?
10. The seeds of an empire were sown when an island became the first province of Rome. Which island? When?
11. Which well-known astronomer and mathematician was a contemporary of King Kumāragupta and his son, Skandagupta?
12. When Great Britain and Ireland became one kingdom, it was ruled by a queen. Who was she?
13. In which city was the black rights leader, Martin Luther King, born?
14. Which country in the world is the largest producer of tin?
15. Like the *dharma chakra* on the Indian flag, or the stars and stripes on the U.S. flag, the flag of every country has some identity mark or other—except one country, in Africa. Which is that country and what is its flag?

Answers:

1. Thirteen. They represent the original 13 colonies which fought Britain and wrested independence to form the United States.
2. Bhava, raga, and tala
3. Tomato
4. Edmund Spenser (1552-99)
5. Japan
6. The Gul Mohar, from Madagascar
7. Denmark
8. Amy Johnson
9. St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City
10. Sicily, in 241 B.C.
11. Aryabhata I. He wrote *Aryabhatiya* around A.D. 500.
12. Queen Anne
13. Atlanta, U.S.A.
14. Malaysia
15. Libya, which has a plain green flag



Tales from Many Lands (America)

A STRANGE TUG-OF-WAR

A long time ago, there lived a mighty white Elephant in a dense forest and a mighty blue Whale at the bottom of the sea. They were good friends and very proud of their prowess.

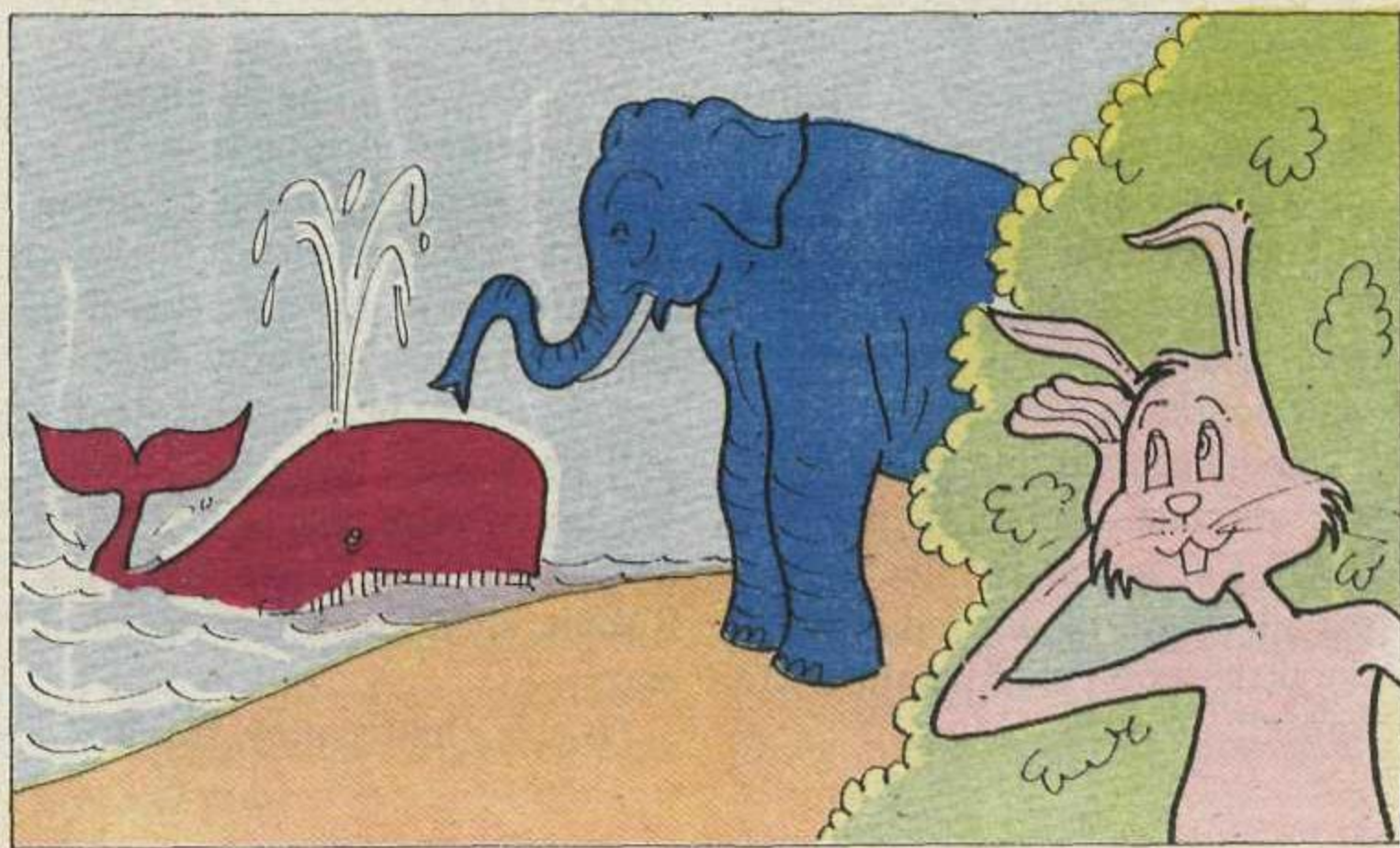
One fine day, the wee little Rabbit was skipping along the shore, hoppety-skip and skippety-hop, when he came across the two mighty friends, busy in a very serious conversation. He at once crouched on the spot and stretched his ears to

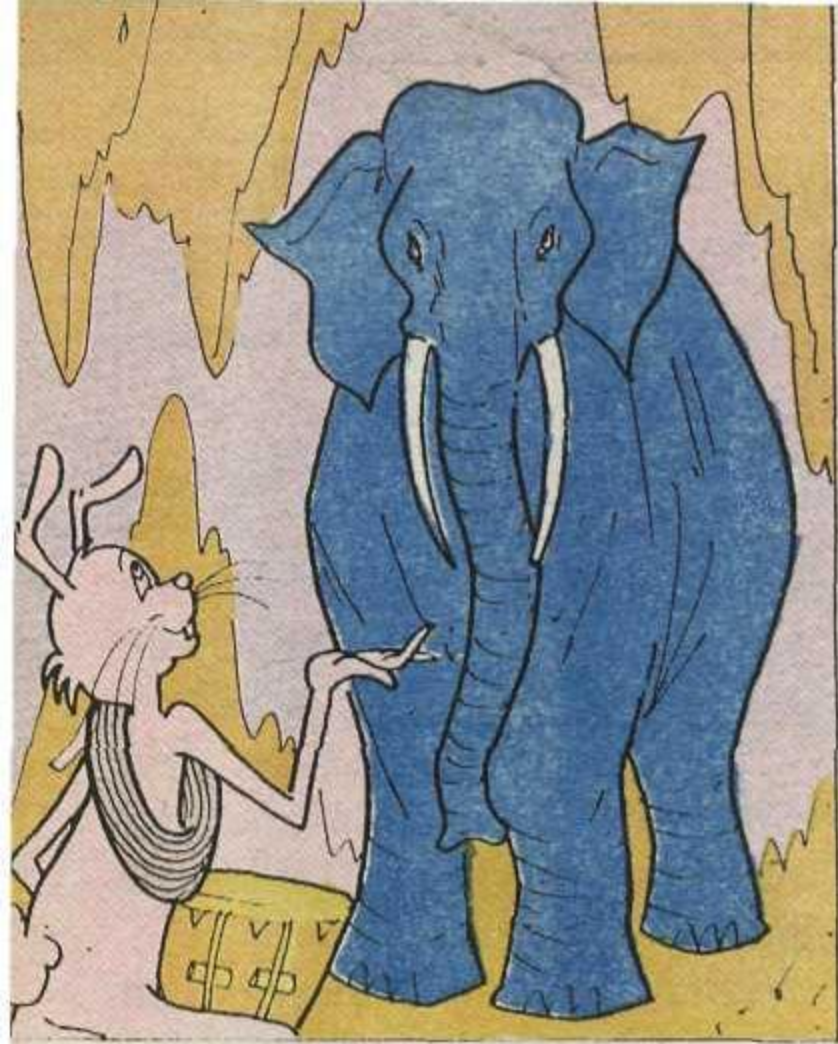
listen to what they were saying.

"Brother Whale," said the Elephant reassuringly, "you're, without doubt, the biggest and strongest creature in the sea."

"Yes, indeed, I am! But you, too, are the largest and the mightiest on land!" said the Whale, smilingly.

Then both fell silent and thought for a while. The wee little Rabbit, pricking his ears to their utmost capacity, waited patiently to hear what will follow.





“Hurrahah! Both of us, together, can rule over the animal kingdom of this earth, on land and in water!” they exclaimed in unison, and it seemed as though the idea had occurred to them simultaneously.

The Elephant trumpeted like a thunder, and the Whale’s whistle was so shrill that it pierced the very depths of the ocean.

‘They’re dreaming of ruling all the animals, including me, are they? I’m going to teach these proud creatures a good lesson!’ the little rabbit said resolutely to himself.

Once again, he hoppety-skipped and skippety-hopped into his cosy little burrow. There he thought and thought and soon hatched out a plan.

The next morning, he procured a very long and sturdy rope, hung his kettle-drum round his neck, and made his way to the Elephant’s cave.

“Good Day, big Brother! You’re stronger than every creature on the earth! Your heart, too, is as soft and kind! Will you do a favour for this humble admirer of yours?” said the Rabbit, in a most flattering tone.

“Yes, yes, indeed, I’ll oblige you!” answered the Elephant, very happy with the compliments.

“My only cow has fallen into a ditch, about a furlong from here. But you needn’t bother to come with me. I’ll tie an end of the rope to your trunk and the other end I’ll fasten round my cow. When I signal you by beating this drum, pull hard, very very hard! For, my poor animal is stuck quite deep in the mud!” explained the Rabbit, shedding a few drops of tears.

“It’s a child’s play for me!”



boasted the Elephant. "Don't you worry. I'll pull her out in no time, even if she is buried to her horns!"

So the wee little Rabbit bound the thick trunk of the Elephant tightly with one end of the rope and, holding the other end between his teeth, hurried towards the shore. It was not very far and he soon reached his destination.

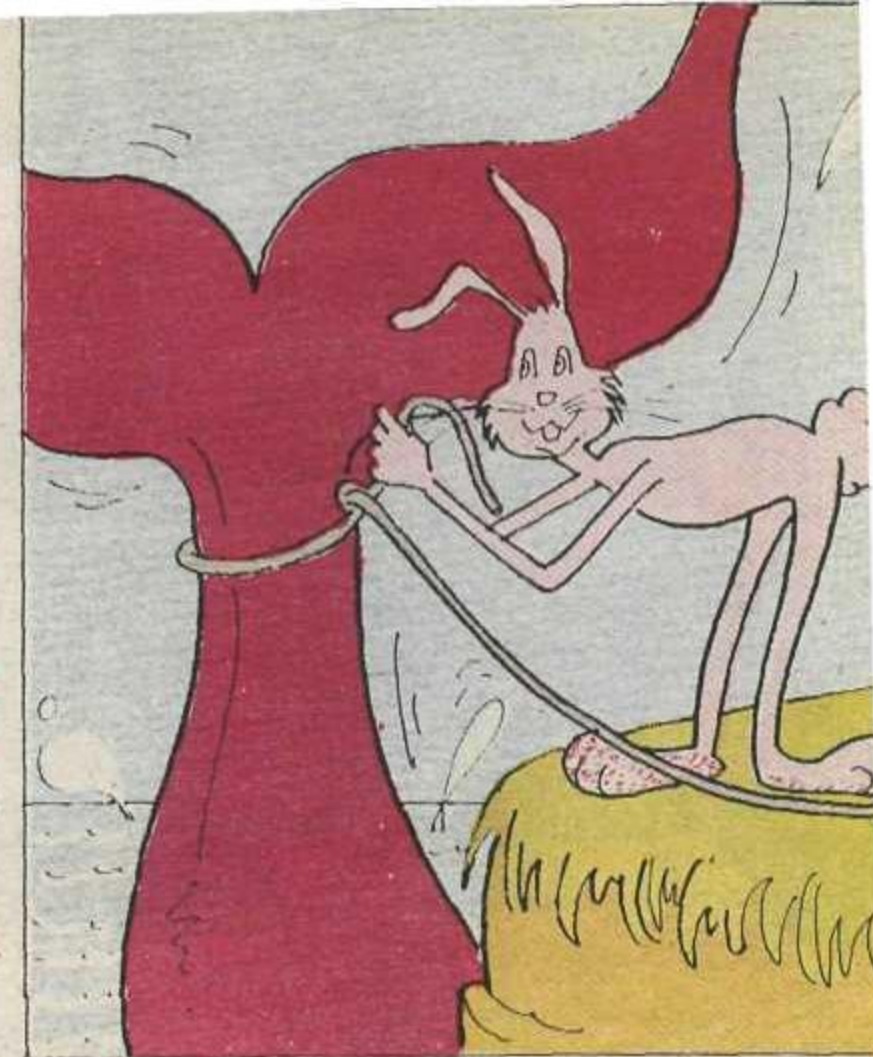
There he found the Whale taking a blissful nap in the warm sun.

"O great King of the Ocean! Accept the salutations of your humble servant!" he said, with a graceful bow.

"Yes, Master Rabbit, what brings you here?" enquired the Whale, with an air of importance, looking only with one eye, half-open.

"My dear and loving cow has almost sunk into the marsh, some little distance away. You alone can help me pull her out. For you're the mightiest creature that I've ever known on this earth!" said the Rabbit, with a choking voice.

"You're welcome! Certainly you deserve all my compassion!" replied the Whale, flattered and



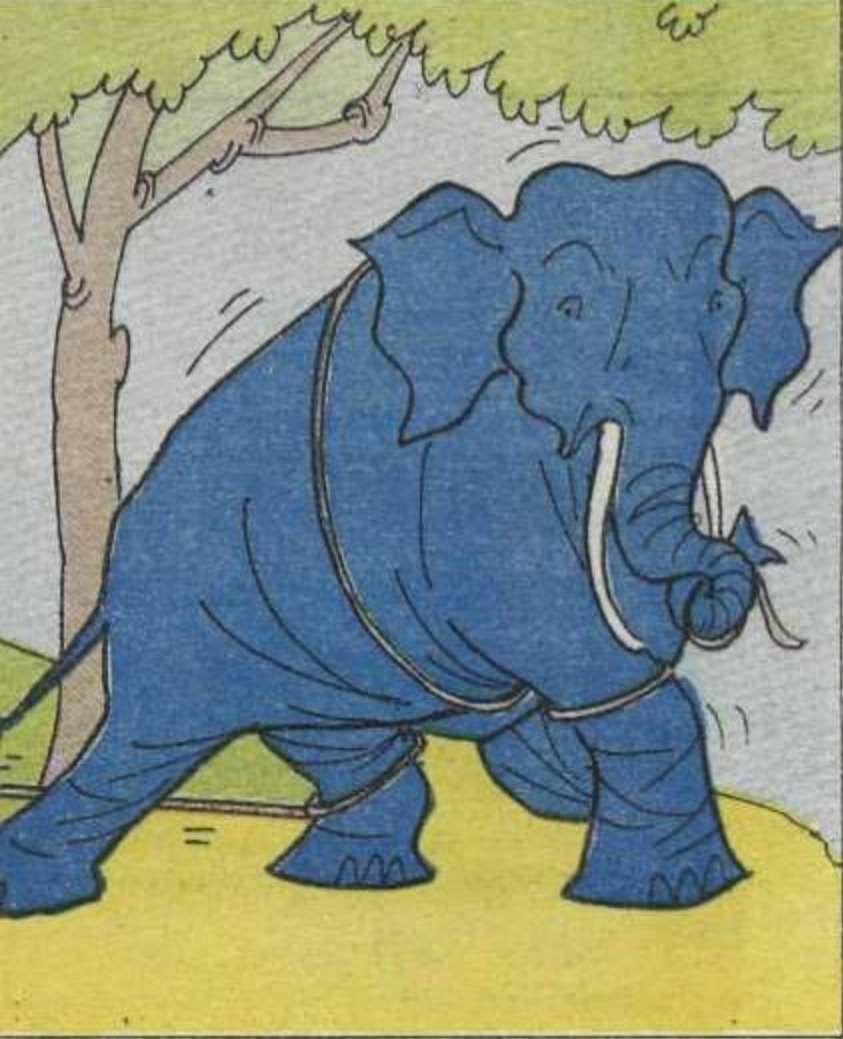
very much pleased.

"I'll tie one end of this rope onto you and the other end to my cow. Then, as soon as you hear me beat this drum, pull. Pull hard indeed for, you know, my cow is quite a heavy one!" explained the Rabbit, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"You needn't fear, Master Rabbit! I've the strength to pull out not one but all the cows in the jungle!" piped in the Whale, confidently.

"Yes, indeed, you have, O mighty Strong! But pull gently in the beginning and then pull harder and harder till you get her





out,” said the Rabbit politely, binding the rope tautly around the Whale.

Hoppety-skip, skippety-hop ran the wee little Rabbit, and he ran into the bushes nearby. There he made himself comfortable and beat his drum loud and clear.

The mighty Elephant began to pull and the mighty blue Whale tugged, too. In a moment, the rope tightened and it stretched and stretched and stretched

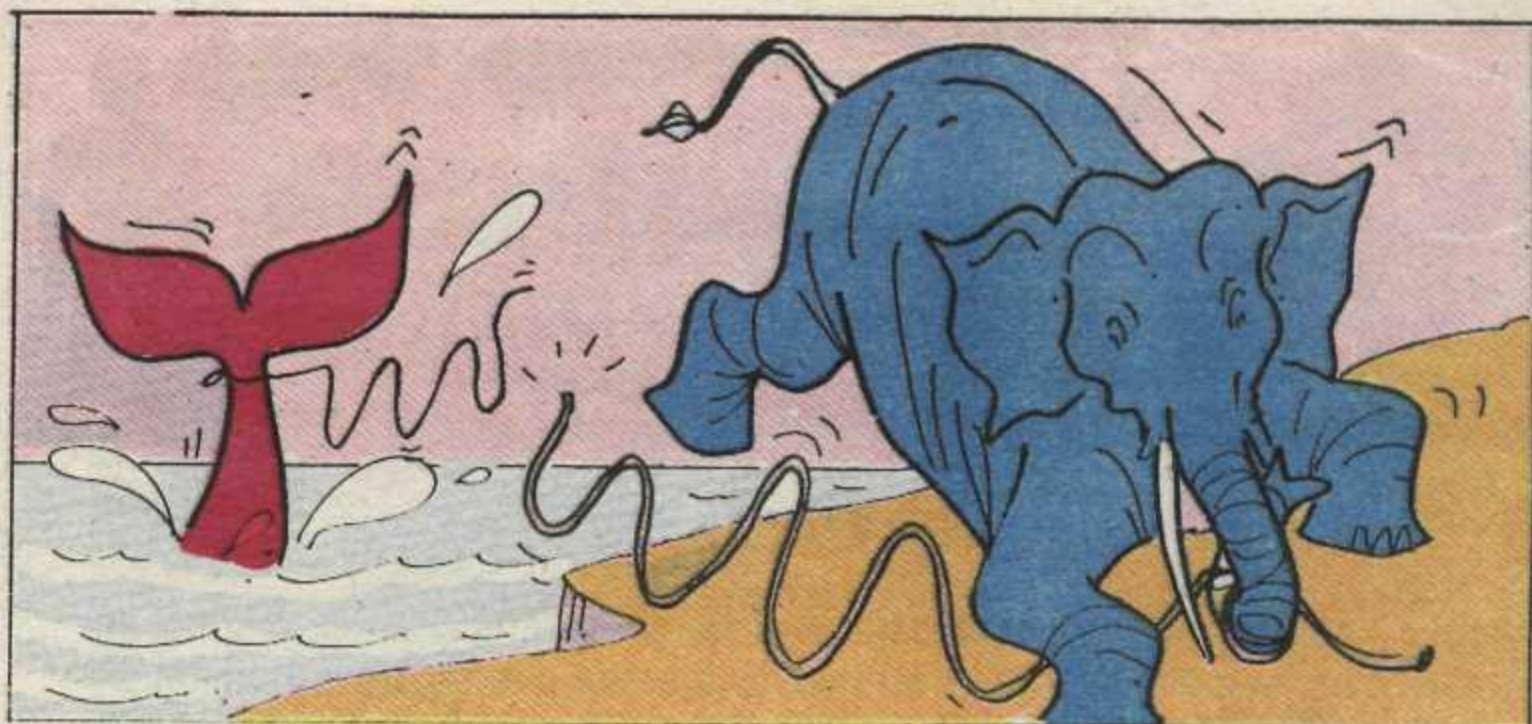
“This must be an extraordinarily heavy cow,” said the Whale and driving his tail deep in the water, gave a big haul.

“Oh! The cow seems to be very firmly stuck in the mud?” thought the Elephant and pulled with all his strength.

Both the friends refused to give up and tugged harder and harder and harder still. It so happened that pretty soon the Whale began to slide towards the land. For the Elephant had something solid and strong to brace against on the surface. Above all, as he pulled the rope a little, he cleverly took a turn with it round his trunk.

But when the Whale found himself sliding rather fast towards the land, he was so furious with the cow that he dived into the very bottom of the sea. That was indeed a great haul. The Elephant was simply jerked off his feet and went sliding, slipping down to the beach right into the water! The Elephant was very angry and confused, too! But he was not the one to give up so easily—he, who was about to rule the earth after all! So, he braced himself once again and pulled to his utmost strength. The jerk was truly a sudden tremendous one! Out popped the Whale from the water!





Then both were amazed to discover the rope in the other one's hold.

"I'll show you for your naughty tricks!" bombarded the Elephant.

"You need a good lesson for trying to fool me!" fumed the Whale.

Then they both began to tug furiously once again. But alas, the poor rope could bear it no longer and it snapped all of a sudden! The Whale turned two somersaults, and the Elephant tumbled backwards and rolled

over twice!

They were at once both angry and ashamed of each other. It dawned on them that their great dream was in fact a too ambitious one!

The mighty white Elephant did trumpet, and the mighty blue Whale did whistle after that, but they did not sound as mighty as they did earlier.

As for the wee little Rabbit, well, he sat in his bush and laughed and laughed in rhythm with his drumbeats.

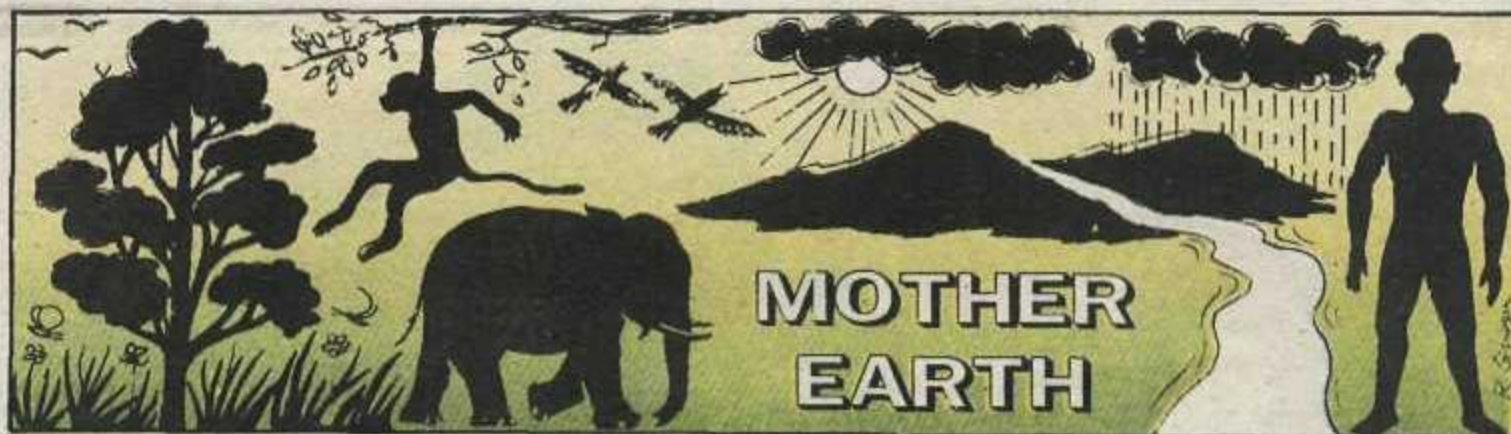
—Retold by Anup Kishore Das

Whoever wants the last drop out of the tankard gets the lid on his nose.

When there is no moon, you go by the stars.

When a mouse laughs at a cat, there is a hole nearby.





FLLOODS

Man has known flood and deluge since times immemorial. During the monsoon, sometimes it rains so heavily that the rivers cannot contain the water in their regular course. So, the extra water crosses the banks and inundates the lands.

How did the people in ancient times develop cities on the banks of great rivers? Did they not know about the floods?

They knew. But in olden days, the rivers themselves had marked some places on their banks into which they will discharge their extra waters. Spots on which cities had grown were not affected. But the situation has now changed. Areas reserved by the rivers themselves for flooding have been occupied by man. As a result, the flood runs amuck, submerging towns and villages.

Also, because man has destroyed the forests on the mountains from which the rivers flow, the earth becomes loose. Over the years the loose earth has flowed into the river. As a result the height of the river-bed is raised. That means, it can contain less quantity of water than earlier. Where can the surplus water go? It flows as flood into the nearby areas.

The worst flood in recorded history occurred in China in 1887. The river Hwang Ho, known as "the Sorrow of China", rose as much as seventy feet high spreading 50,000 square miles, and drowning some six million people.





VEER HANUMAN (42)

(Hanuman is away in Gandhamadana to meet his mother Anjana Devi and to do tapas. At Viswamitra's instance, Rama goes after Yayati, the King of Kasi, who is accused of insulting the sage. Yayati seeks the help of Anjana Devi. She and Hanuman promise to protect him. During his confrontation with Rama, Hanuman proves his devotion to him. Rama repents.)

Hanuman's mother, Anjana Devi, entertained all those who had accompanied Rama to her *ashram* to a sumptuous feast. On their way back to Ayodhya, Sita asked Yayati's wife, Yasodhara, "Didn't I tell you that Hanuman would protect your husband? Aren't you at peace now?"

"All because of your kindness, O Sita Devi!" Yasodhara replied. "When Hanuman bared his chest, I saw not only Lord Rama but you, as well."

Yasodhara's son Chandrangada and daughter Chandra-mukhi, too, expressed their gratitude to Sita's assurance that once Hanuman promised protection

RAMA MEETS LAVA AND KUSA





and Sita were in the garden. A cool breeze swept all over and there was peace everywhere. Rama pointed the rising moon to Sita. "Look at that, Devi!"

"What I see in the east is a reflection of your face, my Lord!" remarked Sita.

"No, not *my* face," Rama corrected her. "It's *your* face, Sita."

"I tell you, my Lord, it's your face," Sita asserted. "You know why? Moon (Chandra) has taken your name (Rama) as a prefix!"

Rama was surprised to hear that from Sita. "Oh! I didn't know the moon has gone to that extent!" he commented.

Rama and Sita remained near the garden pond for a long time. Suddenly there appeared two swans. They did not want to disturb the pair, so they retired to their apartments. On going there, Sita went up to the terrace and enjoyed the beauty of the moonlit night.

Meanwhile, Hanuman was immersed in his *tapas* in Gandhamadana. Several years passed. He had no idea for how many years he was in *tapas*. One day,

to someone, he would see that nothing untoward happened to him.

"I've a request to make to you, Sita Devi," said Yasodhara, humbly. "You, too, must bear two children, like my own children. They'll be a pair of pearls."

Soon they all reached Ayodhya. King Yayati, Yasodhara, and children stayed there as guests of Rama and Sita. Yasodhara and Sita were drawn to each other and they became very close. They spent a happy time in each other's company.

On a full moon night, Rama



an emissary from Rama went up to him. "I'm Bhadra. My lord, Rama, has asked me to take you to Ayodhya," he said.

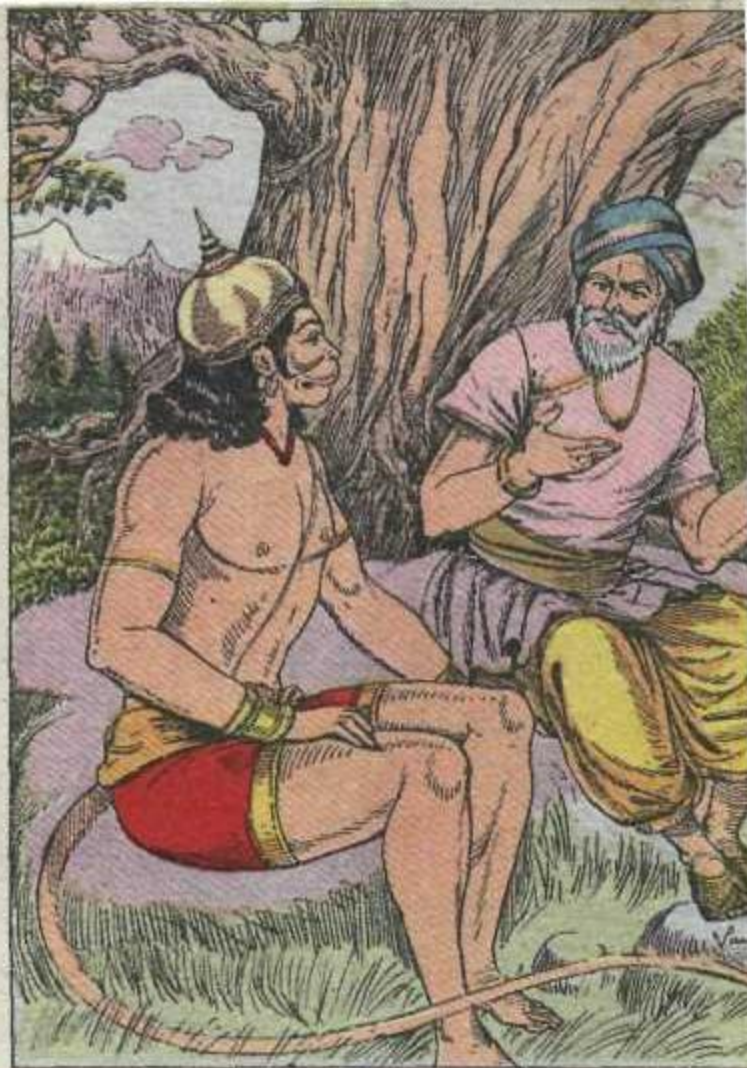
The man appeared to be overcome by grief. "What has happened to you, Bhadra?" asked Hanuman. "You appear to be griefstricken. Has anything untoward happened in Ayodhya?"

"Is there anything more to happen?" Bhadra answered with a question.

"What has happened?" Hanuman insisted on knowing.

"One day, a group of Brahmins called on Rama," Bhadra narrated. "They were accompanied by some *Rishis*. They had a complaint. A low caste called Shambhuka managed to learn the Vedas from Rama. When he made use of his ill-earned knowledge, it caused the decline of *Dharma* in the land and resulted in the premature death of a Brahmin's son. The Brahmins feared that more such calamities might be in store, asked Rama to go and kill that low caste man.

"Rama immediately started, so as to satisfy the Brahmins," Bhadra continued the narration.



"When Rama reached Shambhuka, he found him standing on his head and doing *tapas*. Rama killed him. The man's wife, Kapila, came and wailed before Rama and accused him of killing someone without any cause, saying her husband was innocent, that his only crime was he had tried to educate himself. Kapila then cursed Rama that it was the beginning of some bad days for Rama. She told him that by his very act of taking an innocent person's life, he himself had undermined *Dharma* in the land."



Bhadra did not stop there. "A few days later, one night my lord Rama and I were walking along the streets incognito. We left the boundaries of the capital and reached the washermen's colony, where we overheard the conversation between a husband and wife. 'Where have you been all the while?' the man was asking. 'You had gone to some other house, so you should not enter this house any longer!' To which the woman replied: 'Even our King Rama had accepted Sita who spent a long time in Ravana's palace. So, it's unfair of you

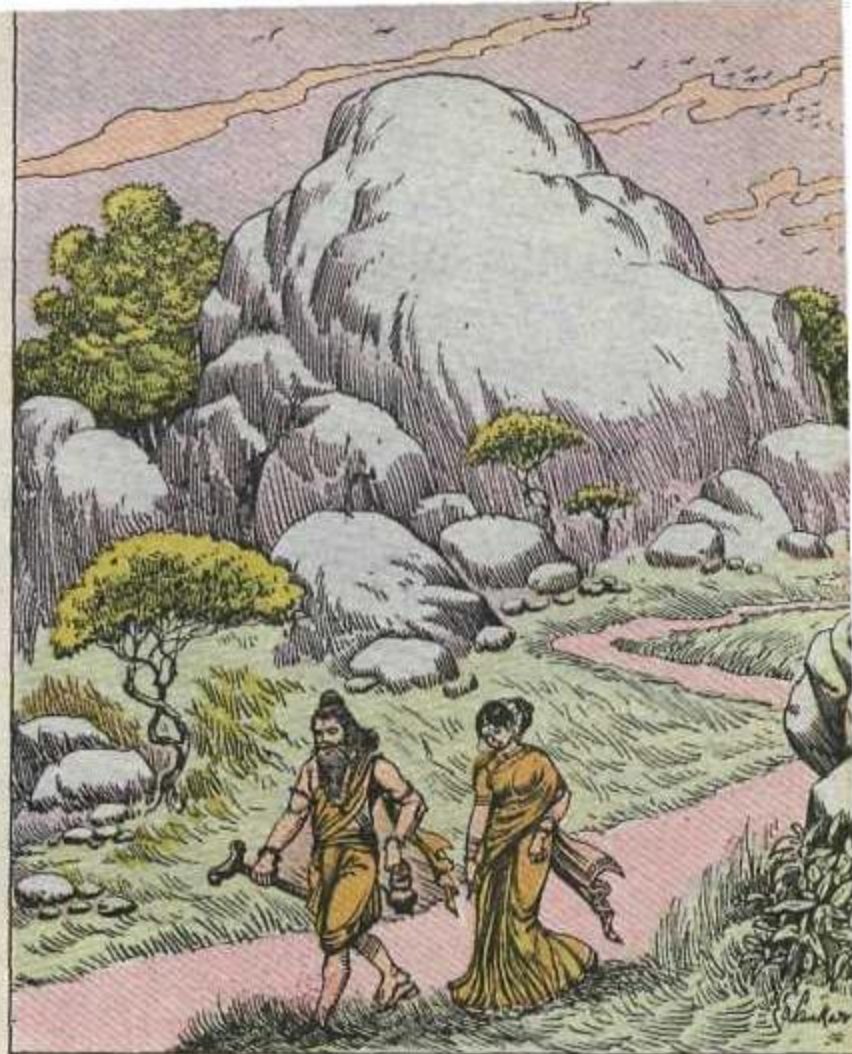
to tell me that you won't take me back. I haven't done anything worse than Sita!' The man was not willing to accept the woman's argument and pleading. 'After all, the king cannot be questioned. He can take back Sita even if she had spent days in someone else's house. But I've my pride. I cannot imitate or emulate Rama. Take it from me, you've no place here!' He shouted at her. After he heard all this, Rama was in a dilemma. Could there still be a doubt about Sita among the public? Any such doubts would have to be removed. A king has to set an example to his subjects. As long as they feel that Sita is not without blemish, she cannot live with him in his palace. So, Rama decided to send Sita away. He asked Lakshmana to leave her in the forest, though she was about to become a mother. He took the excuse that Sita had once expressed a desire to spend a few days in the forest in some *ashram*."

It was now Hanuman's turn to feel aggrieved. He fell silent. Bhadra continued: "The moment Sita was taken away, Rama became restless. I could gauge his



predicament. His mind was burning inside intensely. After all, haven't I carried him on my shoulders when he was only a little child? I used to point out the moon to him and make him jump for joy. That's why people began calling me Ramabhadra! Anyway, I was very angry with that washerman. I wanted to cut him to pieces and thus take revenge. I went after him the next day. But both he and his wife were missing from their house.

"Sita, who was left in the forest, was accosted by sage Valmiki," Bhadra continued his narration. "He took her to his *ashram*, where she gave birth to twins—both boys. Valmiki named them Lava and Kusa, and taught them everything. He composed a long poem on Rama and taught the boys how to sing the *Ramayana*. And it was Sita herself who taught them how to use the bow and arrow. Lava and Kusa then decided that they would go to Ayodhya to find who this hero Rama is. At Ayodhya, they sang the *Ramayana* as they walked the streets. Rama was at that time conducting the Aswamedha *yaga* and had



installed a golden figure of Sita for the purpose. Lakshmana came upon the boys singing the story of Rama as they walked the streets. He took them to the palace.

"On reaching there, the boys sang with great emotion the portion in the *Ramayana* which describes Sita's abandonment in the forest. Everybody attending the *yaga* was moved and began shedding tears. They thought the boys were the sons of some *muni* and received them with great reverence and gave them a lot of gifts before bidding them fare-



well. For the culmination of the *yaga*, the sacred horse was sent all over the country to establish the suzerainty of the Surya dynasty. Soldiers followed the horse to defend and protect it. The horse reached the *ashram* of Valmiki."

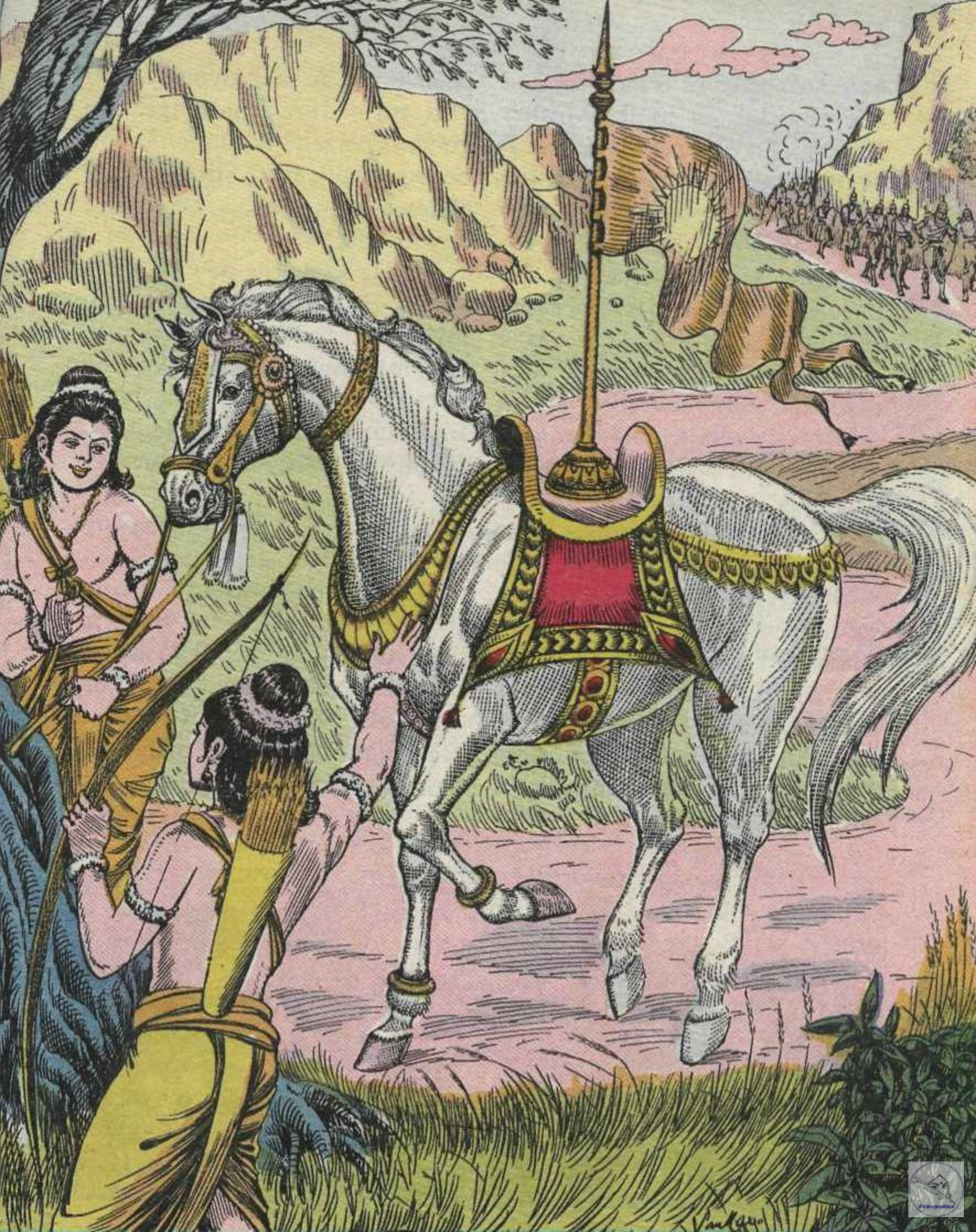
Hanuman now shook himself out of his reverie and listened to Bhadra intently. "Lava and Kusa recognised the horse from the Surya pendant on its forehead, and they tied it to a tree in the *ashram*. Soon Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna, who were following the horse, reached there and demanded that the horse be set free. They refused. It looked as though a battle might have to be waged to free the horse. Both the three brothers could not withstand the shower of arrows from the boys. They fell down unconscious. When Rama heard of this, he himself went to set the horse free. But he, too, was felled by Lava and Kusa. He lay unconscious like his brothers. By then Sitadevi, arrived there on learning that her sons were fighting none other than Rama. 'What have you done, my sons?' she chided Lava

and Kusa. 'Who do you think these four persons are? Here, he's your father, Ramachandra, the King of Ayodhya. The others are his brothers, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna. Do you wish to fight with them.'"

"And then what happened?" Hanuman asked anxiously.

"At that moment, Valmiki also reached there. After Rama had paid his obeisance to the sage, he told him that Sita was pure and without any blemish. He asked Rama to accept her once again. But Rama insisted that she should proclaim herself pure in the presence of the people. Sita took her sons to Ayodhya and handed them to their father. And then she said, 'My husband wants me to proclaim myself a pure woman in public. I am abiding by his wish. However, this is something most unfortunate for any woman. I am asked to prove my chastity not only to my husband but to the satisfaction of the people at large. Can anything more insulting happen to a woman? Anyway I'm now going to prove that. I am the daughter of Mother Earth. If what I've





been suspected of is baseless and has no truth in it, let Mother Bhoomi Devi accept me!" Suddenly, there was an ear-splitting noise, and the earth split into two. Mother Bhoomi Devi appeared seated on her golden throne. She got up from her seat and embraced Sita Devi, as a mother would embrace her daughter. She made Sita sit on the throne along with her and disappeared. Where the earth had split, now joined together.

"Rama was furious. Who could dare take away his wife without his permission? He strung his bow to challenge Bhoomi Devi herself. A voice was heard somewhere from the skies. 'O Rama! Those who were born in the dynasty of King Raghu were worshippers of Mother Earth. You, too, have

been born in that dynasty. Do you now dare challenge the goddess herself? Why should you be angry with Her? She had only claimed her daughter, and not anyone else!'

"Rama let go the bow from his hands. He led Lava and Kusa to the throne and anointed them as crown princes. The Aswamedha horse is still roaming the land. Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna and their armies are following the horse." Bhadra concluded his narration there.

Hanuman now could not control his tears. He told Bhadra, "I'm starting for Ayodhya immediately to meet my Lord. You may take your time to return." He caught hold of his mace and rose to the skies.

—To continue



Conferred honour on himself!

It will be surprising to know that as a school boy, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was a total failure. He was too lazy to qualify as a scholar; he did not like to play games; however, reading was his passion. In fact, he could read *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens when his friends were still learning the alphabet.

Before he began writing plays, he tried his hand at novels. All the five he wrote were rejected by every publisher in London! One of them was published after he had established himself as a dramatist—and it was an instant best-seller.

Almost all his plays had a social message and he was generally regarded as a social reformer. This took off from the fact that he did not believe in god. It is said that in his first job in a firm dealing in estates, he used to relax from his tedious work by indulging in talking to his colleagues on atheism. One day, his boss came to know of this and warned him against any religious discussion during office-hours. That was in Dublin, Ireland, where he was born. He left the job and joined his mother in London.

Whatever he believed in, he was most sincere and honest about it. It was, therefore, only natural that he became a first class speaker. He would punctuate his speeches with anecdotes and witty remarks. At open air meetings and with audiences among the working class, he was easily the star attraction.

Most of his plays were also as serious as the playwright. After his first three plays, which he dubbed as Plays Unpleasant because his audience found them "nasty", he wrote his fourth, *Arms and the Man* (the first of Plays Pleasant) in 1894. He wrote it in a hurry to help a producer-friend; the rehearsals were also hurried through. The audience did not know what the play was really about. They relieved themselves by intermittent laughter! The actors thought it was a farce they were enacting. Shaw was horrified and pulled up the actors. The play did not meet with the first night's appreciation during its 11-week run!

Between 1904 and 1907, his plays were staged in the exclusive Court Theatre. He was now an established dramatist. He reached the pinnacle of his career with *St. Joan*, which was produced in 1924 and which fetched him the Nobel Prize for Literature the next year. The British Government wanted to honour him with a peerage. He refused. He was then offered the Order of Merit. Once again he rejected the honour, saying "I've already conferred this order on myself."



SPORTS SNIPPETS

ONE MORE



Kapil Dev knew it; and everybody was expecting it—that he was crossing Sir Richard Hadlee's world record mark of 431 Test wickets, when he had H. Tillakaratne caught by Sanjay Manjrekar to his ball in the third India-Sri Lanka Test match at the Sardar Patel Stadium at Motera, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on February 8. He had, 10 days earlier, during the second Test in Bangalore, taken the wicket of D. Anurasiri to equal Hadlee's record. The 'Haryana Hurri-

cane', as Kapil is affectionately called, was playing his 130th Test in Ahmedabad. After he got his 432nd victim, Kapil was seen falling on his knees in a thanksgiving prayer and waving to his fans. "It's a marvellous performance... it's a very special moment for Kapil and for world cricket"—was how Sir Richard himself commented. The New Zealander pace bowler got his 431st wicket in his 86th Test. At that time, he thought only Malcolm Marshall, of West Indies, might overtake him; but Marshall retired two years ago. The field was ever since open to India's 35-year-old all rounder. Kapil played his first Test in 1978-79 against Pakistan at Faisalabad, and got his first wicket (Sadiq Mohammed) in the same match. Taslim Arif of Pakistan was his 100th victim at Calcutta (1979-80); at Trinidad (1982-83), he got his 200th victim (Andy Roberts of West Indies), and the 300th wicket (Ramesh Ratnayake, Sri Lanka) at Cuttack in 1986-87; Mark Taylor of Australia was his 400th victim at Perth in 1991-92. Of the 432 wickets, 99 came in 29 matches, all against Pakistan. Twice he took 10 wickets in a single match; on 23 occasions he took 5 wickets in a single innings. His best figure of 9 for 83 was made against West Indies in Gujarat. In his 15-year-long cricket career, he *missed* only *one* Test. Kapil has another record to his credit: of having sent 27,506 deliveries in 129 Test matches, in which he also scored 5,227 runs (8 centuries) and took 63 catches. Kapil joins another Indian 'great'—Sunil Gavaskar, who is the first batsman in the world to complete 10,000 runs in Test Cricket. He made this record in the same stadium in Motera in 1986-87 against Pakistan. Incidentally, Australia's Allan Border completed 11,000 runs in the third Test against South Africa at Adelaide on January 28.

ONE LESS

The Bangalore Test in which Kapil Dev equalled the word record saw the Indian batsman, Navjot Sidhu, missing his century by *just one run*. He thus becomes the 46th player in cricket history to be dismissed at 99. He was the fifth player to have been dismissed lbw at one less than a hundred, and the fifth Indian to join what has been called "The 99 Club".

The others are Pankaj Roy (by Australia in Delhi 1959-60); M.L. Jaisimha (Pakistan, Kanpur, 1960-61); Ajit Wadekar (Australia, Melbourne, 1967-68); and R.F. Surti (New Zealand, Auckland, 1967-68). Three players (M.J.K. Smith—England, R.B. Richardson—West Indies, and J.G. Wright—New Zealand) have been dismissed at 99 *twice*.



NOVEL MASCOTS

The squint-faced dog, 'Cobi', was the mascot of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. The mascot for the next Olympics in Los Angeles is called "Whatzzit" and is still

baffling sports enthusiasts, who have been trying to figure out what it is! The recent (December) South Asian Federation Games at Dhaka, Bangladesh, had the Bengal tiger 'Adamya' as its mascot. 'Raju' the tiger was the mascot of the National Games held in January in Pune. Madras witnessed an International Athletic Meet early in February and lording it over was Leo the hurdling lion. This year's Winter Olympics at Lillehammer, in Norway, had human mascots—for a change. Norway affectionately remembers Haakon and Kristin—a prince and a princess—who brought peace to a turbulent country seven centuries ago. When Haakon was a baby, two skiers took him to safety over the mountains from Lillehammer, in 1206. This event is even now commemorated by a 50km ski race. The skiers carry a 5kg pack! Haakon subsequently became king and reigned from 1217 to 1263. Kristin, an ambitious woman, married someone in the opposition to bring peace to Norway. There were more than 10,000 applicants to play the roles of the prince and princess. The 16 who were selected wore mediaeval style costumes with a huge Olympic logo.

WORLD OF NATURE

Once-upon-a-time birds

It has been estimated that there are some 9,600 species of birds in the world. Won't you feel sorry if you were to be told that the "population" of over 6,000 species is on the decline and that nearly 1,000 out of them have



almost reached a stage of extinction? What is the reason? you wonder. What could it be other

than human attack on the environment and on the birds themselves? Just as the trees and bushes in your garden attract birds, absence of vegetation, as a consequence of indiscriminate felling of trees, prevents any growth in number among birds. For example, the European white stork and the North American yellow-billed cuckoo can at the best be described now as "once-upon-a-time" birds!

Perfect incubator

When it is very cold, we stand in the sun, sit in front of the fireplace or an electric room-heater, or get inside a warm rug or quilt. We know how to search for "alternate sources" of heat or energy. But what can a bird, which lives in the open, do especially when it wants some warmth for its eggs till they hatch? Birds would better learn

things from the Mallee Fowl commonly found in Australia. The male bird digs a pit nearly 1 metre deep and 3m wide, fills it with wet leaves and grass, and covers the pit with sand. When the leaves and grass start decomposing, heat is produced.




The cock makes a small hole through which the hen lays her eggs—one per week for almost six months! With its tongue, the cock ascertains the level of heat and either removes or adds sand, so as to maintain a certain level. And the chicks hatch at weekly intervals!

Dinosaurs in India?

Well, we have to believe that these giant animals did once roam our country! In the last ten years, nearly 1,000 whole or fragmented fossilised eggs have been unearthed in Khera district of Gujarat. The oval shaped eggs are 11cm tall and a little over 7cm wide. They are rather heavy because they have been silicified and fossilised. According to researchers in Punjab University, these eggs are 65,000,000 years old.





New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

The Three Rings

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. May be you've decided not to give up as yet, but you must be feeling tired. You may



relax for a while by listening to the story of Lathangi." The vampire then began his narration.

Madhav, Kesav, and Govind were three Rajput youngsters of Jaipura. They were inseparables. Wherever they went, they went together. One day, they reached a temple. "We belong to well-to-do families of this place," remarked Madhav. "We've known no misery in life, which has all along been smooth. Our parents have seen to it that whatever we needed were provided. They never bothered us

with any chores. We get our food on time, and we can go anywhere we like. Somehow or other I feel, it's all very monotonous. We must do something good for our country, which needs the services of people like us." His friends readily agreed to his suggestion.

By then the priest came out to give them *prasad*. They confided in him. "What you've decided is laudable," the *pujari* complimented them. "One should not be selfish, but do something good for society. For instance, there's a man-eater in the nearby forest; it has been attacking whoever went into the forest. It'll be a good idea if you three killed the animal and saved the people."

"Oh! We never knew about the tiger," said one of the friends. "We shall go and kill the beast!" The next day, the three young men started for the forest. Till afternoon they searched for the tiger. They were dead tired after a long walk in the hot sun. They were both hungry and thirsty. They plucked some fruits and drank water from a river that flowed nearby.

As they were returning from the river, they heard someone

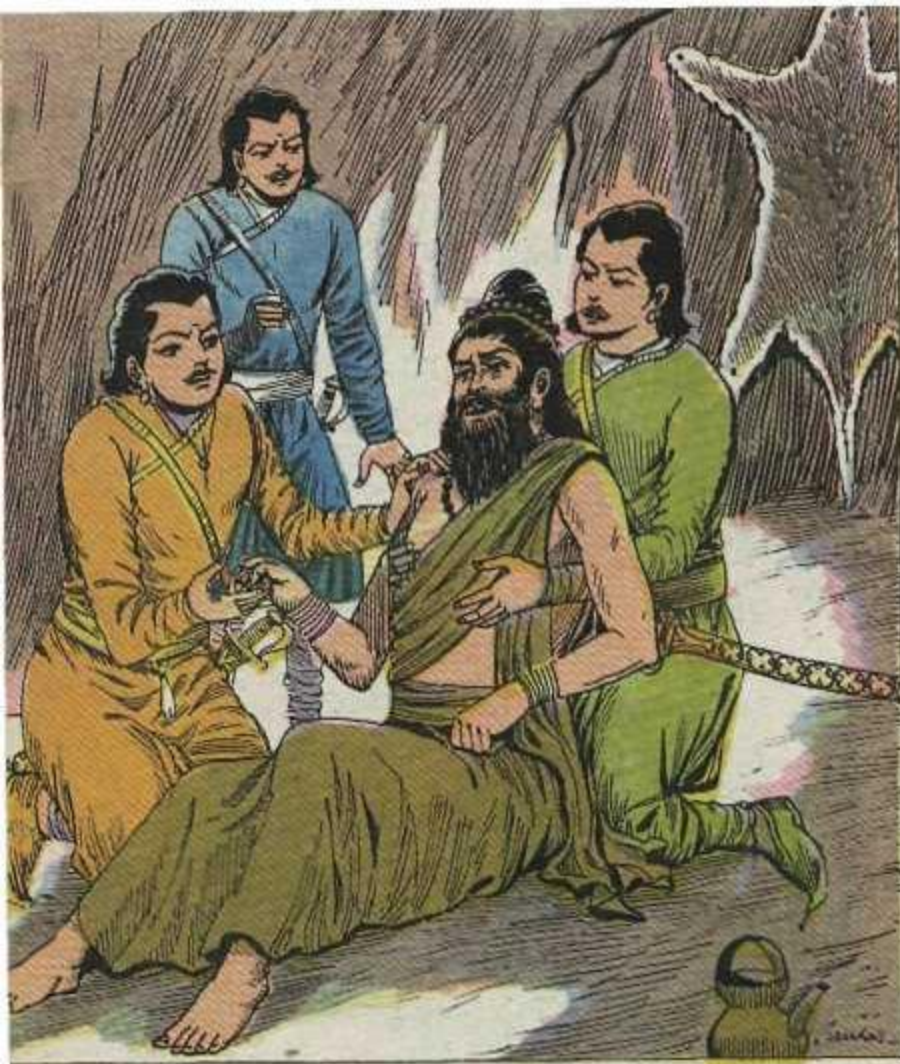


crying. It came from a cave, and all three ran to the cave. They suddenly halted in their tracks when they saw a huge serpent coming out of the cave, hissing angrily. Madhav and Kesav drew their sword and in one swish, the serpent lay dead—in two pieces. They heard a man shouting from inside the cave. So they rushed in, to find a *sanyasi* fighting for his life. "Oh sage! Who are you?" enquired Kesav.

"I'm a sinner!" said the sage, full of remorse. "I cheated my *guru* and stole three magic rings he had in his possession. I then hurriedly left the Himalaya

mountains and came here in the hope that I'll lead a princely life. Now, I've been punished for my wicked act. I've been bitten by a snake. I'll be dead soon. So, I'm presenting the rings to you. The one who wears the ring with the green stone will have new and newer ideas and thoughts. The one with the red stone will tell its owner ways to carry out the ideas of the other. And the one who wears the ring with the blue stone will have the power and strength to execute the ideas of the first one, by the methods suggested by the second person. I don't have any use for the three rings.





Maybe they can be of some help to you.”

The *sanyasi* then gave the green ring to Kesav, the red one to Madhav, and the blue one to Govind. He did not live for a moment longer. The three friends cremated the *sanyasi* and then returned to Jaipura. Somehow they felt that they should not keep the rings with mysterious powers with them. They decided to hand them over to the king.

The next day they called on the king. They told him about the rings and their strange powers. The king appreciated their gesture in giving away the rings to

him and invited them to stay in his palace for a few days. They agreed. The king made all arrangements for their comfort. The king had been worrying about his daughter's wedding. He hoped that the rings would help him find a solution.

The king took the rings to Princess Lathangi. “These rings possess strange powers. They were brought to me by three young men. Kesav was wearing the green ring. Its wearer will have new and fresh ideas and thoughts. The methods by which such ideas can be put into effect will be known to the one who possesses the red one. Madhav had that ring on him. However, the ideas can be really executed through the methods suggested by the wearer of the red ring only by the one who possesses the blue ring. It was given to me by Govind. How do you like them?” the king asked his daughter.

“They look grand!” said Lathangi. “Father, the young men appear to be keen on doing good to others. They seem to be very different from any of those princes who come here seeking my hand, but they are really after our kingdom. Whereas these



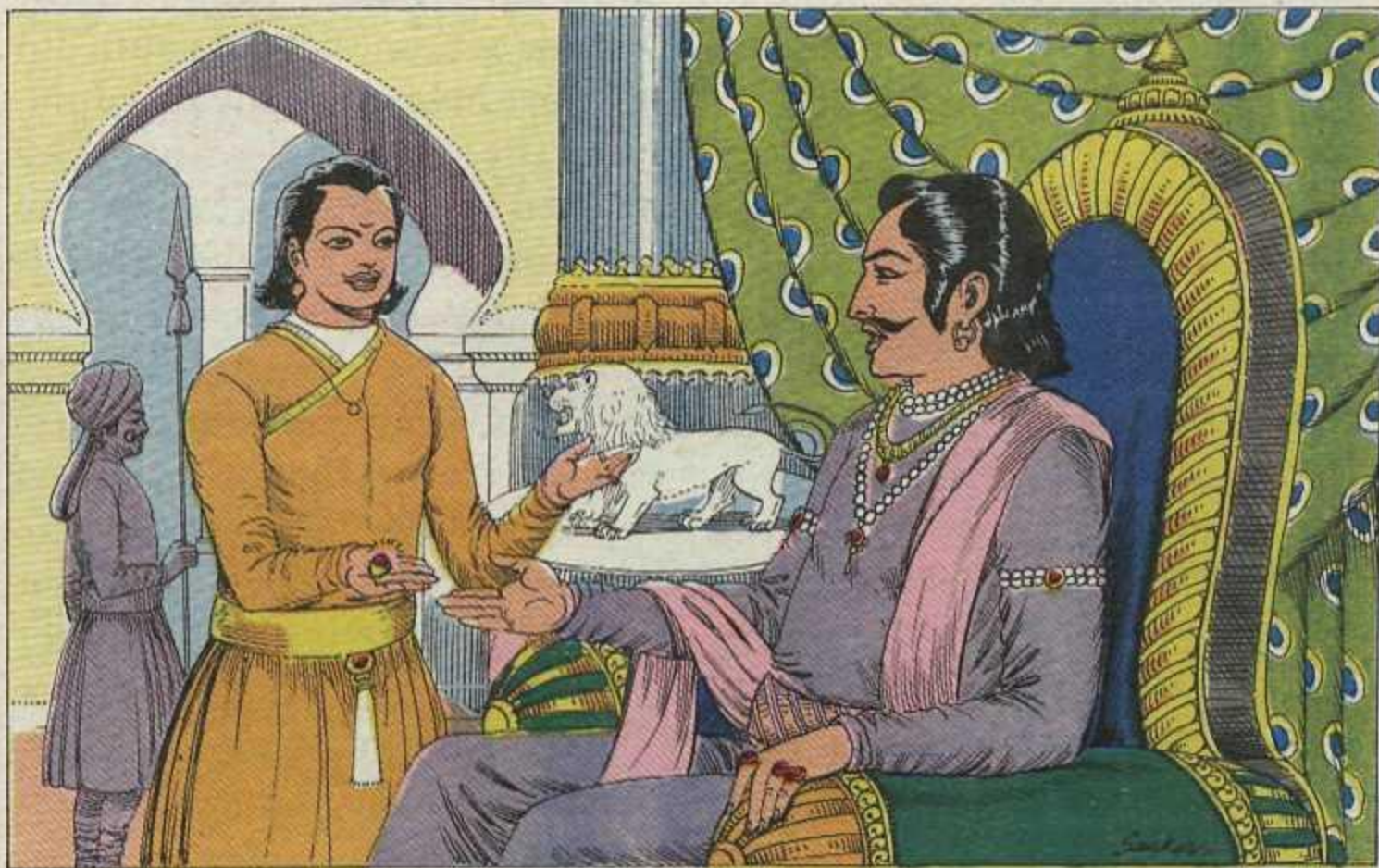
youngsters, instead of keeping the rings with themselves despite being aware of their powers, were willing to part with them for the king. That shows their loyalty to their king and their country. I have till now rejected the several proposals you brought to me. I wish to marry someone who is loyal to his country and who will care for me. I think one of these young men will be suitable for me. I shall choose one of them for my husband."

The king was overjoyed. "That's great, Lathangi! I'm very happy. Till now you had rejected whatever proposal I brought

you. I'm only glad you'll choose one of these three young men. They're all Rajputs, but look like princes. Whomever you select will also be acceptable to me. The rings have at last solved my long worry. I shall return them to the young men. But I would like to know your choice without much delay."

"After I meet them, I shall let you know my decision, father," said Princess Lathangi. "But please find out whether anyone of them would marry me."

The king went back to the three young men and told them how the rings had solved his





problem. All of them assured him that they had no objection to marrying her. They accompanied the king to the Princess's chambers. They were taken aback by her beauty. Lathangi found all of them handsome and equally suitable. The king returned the rings to them. After they left her room, Lathangi said, "Father, I've chosen Kesav who wears the green ring!"

"As you wish, my darling daughter!" said king and happily went about making arrangements for their wedding. On

an early auspicious day, the wedding took place in all splendour.

The king decided to abdicate the throne and crowned Kesav as the king. Soon afterwards, Kesav made Madhav his minister, and appointed Govind as the commander. Between the three, they looked after the kingdom well, and the people were happy and prosperous.

The vampire concluded the story and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Why did Lathangi choose Kesav as her husband? She rejected the princes who went to her as suitors and chose an ordinary Rajput. How was she certain that the youth did not have his eyes on the kingdom, like the princes whom she rejected? Govind, wearing the blue ring, alone had the capability to carry out the ideas thought up by Kesav. The princess was aware of that, yet she did not choose him. Madhav, wearing the red ring, alone had the powers to decide the ways and means of putting into effect Kesav's ideas. Lathangi did not choose him either. Why? O King! If you know the answers and yet



choose not to satisfy me, mind you, your head will be blown to pieces!"

The king was not agitated over the vampire's threat. He calmly replied: "Kesav, Madhav, and Govind each got a ring from the *sanyasi*. Instead of keeping the rings with them, they gave them away to the king who was anxious about the welfare of his subjects. That clearly shows, they were not greedy and did not crave for wealth, power, or status—all of which they could have easily gained with the help of the strange rings. Lathangi had realised this. The three rings were interdependent—with one of them giving advice, another formulating methods, and the third one carrying out the ideas. The

methods and the execution would not come into play without the basic idea or advice and this emanated from the green ring, without the existence of which, the other rings would have had no function, and they would be worthless. That's why Lathangi chose the one who possessed the green ring—Kesav. Her choice thus was correct. Kesav, too, realised this and he later chose Madhav as his minister and Govind as his commander. So, there was nothing wrong about Lathangi's choice."

The vampire realised to his dismay that the king had outwitted him again. He flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



THE FROG FACTOR

Singaravelu borrowed money from a moneylender giving him his farm as surety. The moneylender waited for five years. Singaravelu did not repay the loan, nor did he pay any interest on the loan as had been agreed to upon. So, the moneylender went to the farm and took possession of it. Singaravelu complained to the village chief against the moneylender. The village chief refused to help him as he was clearly at fault. Singaravelu then went the king, who listened to him. "Why didn't you repay the money for five years?" the king asked him.

"How could I?" said Singaravelu, apologetically. "For five long years, frogs in our area have not been swimming. In fact, we wonder whether they even know how to swim!"

The minister, who was present at that time, wondered what Singaravelu was trying to say. He shook his head as if he was stumped.

"You give him enough money to pay the interest on the loan!" said the king, turning to his minister, who now appeared dumbstruck. "What he wanted to say was, in his area there has been no rain for five years. He was affected by the drought, and that's why he was unable to clear his debt."

The minister noticed the sympathetic look on the king's face.





What is a 'hotline'?

—Bastiram Saini, Nawalgarh

Any line of speedy communication, ready for an emergency, is called a hotline. Like the one they had between the White House in Washington and Kremlin in Moscow, before the break up of the Soviet Union.

What is the black box in an aeroplane?

—Vasudev Sharma, Moradabad

It is a unit of electronic equipment, in a sealed package, which records all the flight details from the take off to the landing. In the event of an accident, the black box is retrieved and sent for decoding to find these details, which will also include the conversation between the crew in the cockpit and between the pilots and the control towers.

Who founded the YWCA? When?

—Pawan Dalmia, Sambalpur

The Young Women's Christian Association is an organisation for women and girls formed in 1887 when two organisations, both founded in 1855 (one by Emma Roberts, the other by Lady Kinnaid)—decided to merge. The YMCA was founded in 1844 to promote intellectual, spiritual, and physical excellence in young men.

Correction: Reader Abinash Moharana, of Therubali, tells us that Osmium (not iridium as stated in the February issue) is the heaviest substance known. When 1cu. cm of iridium weighs 22.4gms, osmium will weigh 22.48gms.

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The winning entry: "Time to Spare" "Time to Share"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

Wealth acquired by unlawful means remains for ten years; in the eleventh, it disappears completely.

—Chanakya

They also serve who stand and stare.

—Milton

Take the cash in hand, and waive the rest.

—Omar Khayyam

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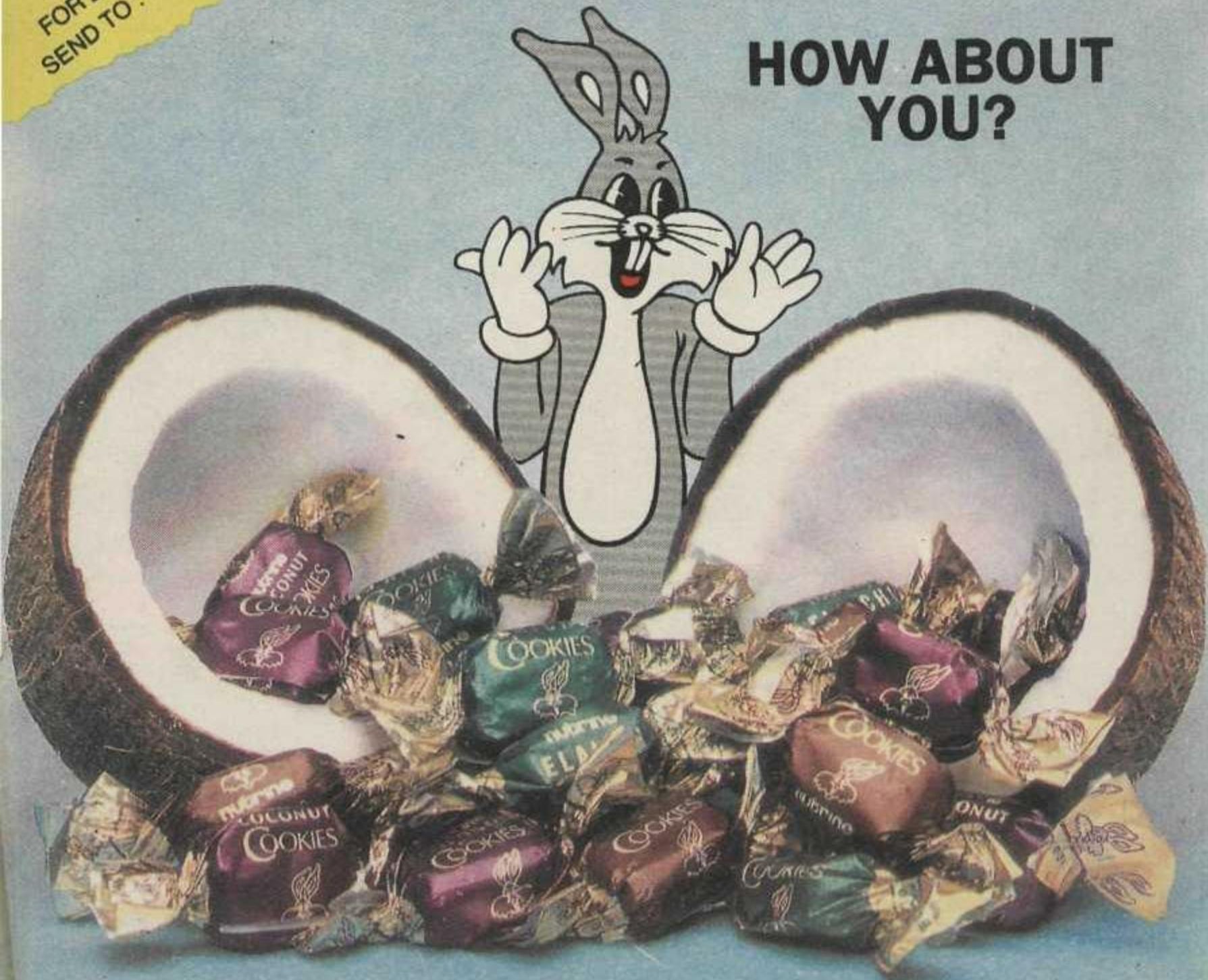
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